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CROFT, Herbert, bp. of Hereford

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THE Naked Truth.

OR, THE TRUE STATE OF THE Primitive Church.

BY AN

Humble Moderator

Zach. 8. 19. *Love the Truth and Peace.*
Gal. 4. 16. *Am I therefore become your Enemy, because I tell you the truth?*

Printed in the Year, 1675.

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Printed in the Year, 1695.

An Humble Petition to the Right Honourable

The Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament.

MY *Lords and noble Gentlemen*, You have fully expressed your Zeal to God and his Church in making Laws for Unity in Faith, and Uniformity in Discipline: for, as our Saviour said, *A Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand*; so the same may certainly be said of a Church, the reason being the same for both: And I call the Searcher of all hearts, the God of life and death, to witness, that I would most readily, yea most joyfully sacrifice all I have in this world, my life and all, that all *Non-Conformists* were reduced to our Church. But it falls out most sadly that your Laws have not the desired effect, our Church is more and more divided; such is the perverse nature of man, *Niti in Vetitum*, obstinately to oppose Authority, especially when they can pretend the colour of Religion and Conscience; this carries so great an applause among the Vulgar (still envious at Superiors) that it is, as it were, Nuts to an Ape, sweeter to them than any other thing this world affords: for the enjoyment of this they will endure any thing, imprisonment, loss of goods, yea sometime of life also. And this is it which mainly nourishes our Divisions, gives great advantage to the growth of Popery, and threatens the total ruine of our Church. Many who were formerly very zealous for our Church, seeing these our sad divisions, and not seeing those of the Roman-Church, nor their gross Superstitions (which their Priests conceal till they have got men fast) are easily seduced by their pretended Unity, and daily fall from us. This makes my heart to bleed, and my soul with anguish ready to expire, rather than live to see that dismal day of relapse into their manifold Idolatries. Wherefore I humbled my Soul before God in fasting and prayer, begging dayly the assistance of his holy Spirit, to direct me to some healing Salve for these our bleeding Wounds: and therefore I have some reason to believe, that what is contained in these following Papers, comes from the great goodness of God, who never fails those who seek him in humility and sincerity both, which I am confident I have done; and this I am sure of, that no Worldly designs have moved me to this, but have often

tempted me to give it over; I am also sure, that there is nothing contained therein, which is contrary to the known Laws of the Land: in this only I confess I have transgressed, in putting it forth without licence; and for this I beg of God and you, as *Naaman* did of *Elisha*, *In this thing the Lord and you pardon your Servant*; and I hope you will say unto me as *Elisha* did unto *Naaman*, *Go in peace*; and I farther hope this shall not cast such a prejudice upon it, as to make you cast it by, or read it with disgust. I do not expect you should approve any thing upon the account of my seeking God in this, but upon my Reasons alledged; nor do I expect that upon my Reasons you should approve all: yet I beseech you seriously consider all, and God of his infinite goodness direct you to that which may make for the Unity of our Church, by yielding to weak ones (if not wilful Ones also) as far as your Reason and Conscience will permit: sure you cannot so loath all condescention, as not to loath more, and detest Papal confusion, which certainly comes on apace by our division; and of two evils, both Reason and Religion require us to chuse the less; now doubtless you cannot think condescention (if evil at all, sure not) so evil as Papal Idolatry, and that Papistry is Idolatry, is so clearly proved by our Learned Dr. *Stillingfleet*, as it were lost labour to say more of it. Condescention may seem in some respects imprudent, but whether in this conjuncture of affairs imprudent, I beseech you again consider well. The Wisest men have changed their Counsels and Resolves upon second thoughts, much more upon experience, and approaching evils not at first discovered. It is a common thing with Princes when they find their main enemies power encrease much, to make peace with lesser enemies, on conditions never before to be endured; Self-preservation being the prime principle in all Creatures rational and irrational, springing from Nature it self, it should in nature and reason over-ballance any other consideration; and whatever is done to this end, if not sinfully done, must needs be wisely done. I most humbly beseech the All-wise God, and sole giver of wisdom, to pour down his Holy and Wise Spirit upon you. *Amen.*

To the READER.

CHristian Reader, *so I term you, hoping you have in some measure the Spirit of Christ, and desire it more, the Spirit of meekness, humility, charity, not to censure my errors, and enveigh against them, but to pity and endeavour to rectifie them, if you find any; and I assure you in the word of a Christian, I shall be far more ready to recant, than to vent an error: If you be not thus Christianly disposed, I earnestly beseech you read no further, for I am sure you will be displeas'd with it: and can you think it wisdom to run your self into displeasure? enjoy your present quiet, and let me rest. But if you be so Christianly disposed as I mentioned, then I as earnestly beg of you to proceed, to discover my errors and amend them. But perchance you will ask, who I am, why did I not tell you, by putting my name to this Pamphlet? I will ingenuously confess the cause. I am a weak man, of great Passions, not able to bear Commendations or Reproach; my small ability puts me out of danger of the first, but in great fear of the later. Why then was I so forward to publish my weakness? to have it cured; yet truly I have not been very forward, for it is now above two years since I had these thoughts, in which time I have read and conferred all I could to discover if I were in an error, but for all I yet could meet with, do not find it so, but hope all I say is truth and that it may be useful to the Publique, in this present conjuncture of affairs. Therefore I proceed, and in the next place most humbly beseech all that read this, to lay aside all bias of interest or education, both are very great, I am sure I found it so very long before I could master them, and that of education most difficult; were it not so, there could not be that difference of opinion in Christian Religion, all allowing the Bible for the Rule of Faith, the Papists themselves do not reject it, but add to it the authority of the Church. I verily believe there are thousands of* Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, *both Learned and Religious, who would lay down their lives for the truth they profess, and yet are divided in opinion meerly by education, having in their youth so imprinted their own opinions in their mind, as you may sooner separate their body than their opinion from their Soul. Nay, I have heard that among the* Turks *there are many wise and moderate persons that are as zealous to maintain their ridiculous* Alcaron *as we our* Bible; *which cannot proceed from any thing but the strong bias of education, which so wheels about and intoxicates their brain. And to say somewhat more particular of our own Nation here, Those that have been educated in that way as to sit at the Communion, and baptize their Children without the Cross, had rather omit these Sacraments than use kneeling or the Cross; and those that have been educated in kneeling and crossing, though they acknowledg they are meer Ceremonies indifferent, yet had rather omit the Sacraments, than omit the Ceremonies, just as if a man had rather starve than eat bread baked in a Pan, because he hath used bread baked in an Oven. So that Religion in many is really but their humor, fancy passeth for reason, and*

custome

custome is more prevalent than any argument. This is the thing which makes me fear I shall meet with very few that will calmly and indifferently consider what I write, but will presently startle at it as new and cross to their Genius, or to their interest, or their reputation, which they value above all, I mean the esteem and kindness of their best friends and acquaintance, whose taunts and reproach they cannot bear; but I humbly beseech them to pause a while, and lay it by till the passion be over, 'till they have mastered all these difficulties. I beseech them to set before their eyes the beauty, the honour, the stedfastness of Truth, the comfort, the delight, the everlasting felicity of a clear and rectified Conscience; then resume it and consider again. But they cry Pish, 'tis not worth it, 'tis a ridiculous toy, and savours something of the Sectarian: I grant there are some things among the Sectarians I approve of, I will not reject and condemn any truth uttered, or any good action performed though said and done by the Devil. I consider the things, and if good, embrace them, whoever utters them, though I detest his errors in other things; You will say the same; then I beseech you do the same; consider what I say simply in it self, whether the Papists or Anabaptists say the same, it matters not; I hope you will not reject Christ because they both profess him. But if after all your serious patient, unbiast consideration, you find it an erroneous contemptible Pamphlet, yet contemn not the person that wrote it in the sincerity of his heart, lest you receive the same measure again from Christ, who hath assured us, that shall be his rule, to meet unto us the like. Christ died for the salvation of my poor soul as well as yours, contemn it not therefore, but endeavour to rectifie it; if God hath given you more knowledg and wisdome than me, be not high-minded but fear, and let him that stands take heed lest he fall. *Thus I pray for you, do you the like for me, and however we differ in Opinion, let us accord in Charity, and in Christ Jesus the Redeemer of us all.* Amen.

Concerning

Concerning Articles of Faith.

THat which we commonly call the Apoſtles Creed, if it were not Compoſed by them, yet certainly by Primitive and Apoſtolick Men, and propoſed as the Summe of Chriſtian Faith, the Summe total neceſſary to Salvation; It can't be ſuppoſed they left out any thing which they thought neceſſary to Salvation, they might as well have omtted half or all: as one Commandment broken is the ſame in effect with all, ſo one neceſſary Principle of Faith denyed, Cancels all, and ſhuts out from Heaven. When I ſpeak of believing the Apoſtles Creed, I do not mean, that we believe all there contained with a Divine Faith becauſe it is there contained, for we have no aſſurance that the Apoſtles Compoſed that Creed; but we are ſure all that is in that Creed is evident in Scripture to any common underſtanding; therefore we believe all with a Divine Faith. But I mention this Creed onely, to ſhew that the Primitive Church received this as the ſum total of Faith neceſſary to Salvation; why not now? Is the ſtate of Salvation altered? If it be compleat, what needs any other Article? You would have men improve in Faith, ſo would I, but rather *intenſivè* than *extenſivè*, to confirm it rather than enlarge it: One ſound grain of Muſtard-ſeed is better than a buſhel of unſound chaffie ſtuff. 'Tis good to know all Goſpel-Truths, and to believe them, no doubt of that; but the Queſtion is not what is good, but what is neceſſary. I pray remember the Treaſurer to *Candace*, Queen of *Ethiopia*, whom *Philip* Inſtructed in the Faith; his time of Catechiſing was very ſhort, and ſoon proceeded to Baptiſm. But *Philip* firſt required a Confeſſion of his Faith, and the Eunuch made it, and I beſeech you Obſerve it; *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*: and ſtraitway he was Baptized. How? no more than this? No more; this little grain of Faith being ſound, believed with all his heart, purchaſed the Kingdom of Heaven: Had he believed the whole Goſpel with half his heart, it had been of leſs value in the ſight of God; 'tis not the Quantity, but the Quality of our Faith God requireth. But ſure the Eunuch was more fully Inſtructed; it may be you are ſure of it, but I could never yet meet with any aſſurance of it, nor any great probability of it; I am ſure he ſaw *Philip* no more, and I am ſure *Philip* required no more, but

baptized him on this, and had the Eunuch departed this Life in the same instant that *Philip* parted from him, I believe I have better assurance that this faith would have saved the Eunuch, than any Man hath that he ever was taught more: See 1 *John* 4.2. *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is of God*: but the more the better still I grant, though no more necessary. Hast thou more Faith, have it to thy self before God, *happy is he who condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth*; happy is he who is thankful to God for having received much, and despiseth not him that hath received little: God dispenseth his gifts and graces according to his free Will and Pleasure, nor doth he require more of any Man than according to the proportion he hath given, no more should we.

Nothing hath caused more mischief in the Church than the establishing new and many Articles of Faith, and requiring all to assent unto them. I am willing to believe that zealous men endeavoured this with pious intentions to promote that which they conceived Truth; but by imposing it on the dissenters, caused furious Warrs, and lamentable Blood shed among Christians, Brother Fighting against Brother, and Murthering each other. Can there be any thing more irrational than to endeavour to promote the truth of the Gospel contrary to the Laws of the Gospel? to break an evident Commandment to establish a doubtful Truth? I say, doubtful to him on whom it is imposed, though seeming clear to him that imposes it. If it were fully express'd in Scripture-words, there would need no new Expression, no new Article; if it be not fully expresst in Scripture, but deduc'd from Scripture-Expressions, then what one Man thinks clearly deduc'd, another may think not so; I mean, not another ignorant and weak, but as learned, and as able. What more common than in Divinity and Philosophy Shools? One cryes, this is a clear Demonstration; another cryes, no such matter, but flatly denies it. Mens understandings are as various as their Speech or their Countenance, otherwise it were impossible there should be so many understanding and moderate, yea, and conscientious Men also, *Papists*, *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, all in such Opposition one against another, all believing Scripture, yet so differing in the deductions from Scripture. Truly I think him very defective in Charity, however he abound in Faith, who thinks all *Papists*, or *Lutherans*, or *Calvinists* malitiously or wilfully blind.

As for my part, I think nothing can be more clearly deduc'd from Scripture, nothing more fully express'd in Scripture, nothing more suitable to Natural Reason, than that no Man should be forc'd to believe, for no Man can be forc'd to believe; you may force a Man to say this or that, but not to believe it. First, as to Reason: If you bring a Man an evident Demonstration, and he hath a Brain to understand your Demonstration, he can't but assent to it. If you hold a clear Printed Book with a clear Candle to a Man of clear Eyes and able to Read, he will certainly Read; but if the Print be not clear, or the Candle or his Sight not clear, or he not Learned to Read, can your force make him read?

read? And just so it is with our understanding, which is the eye of our Soul, and a demonstration being as a Candle to give Light; if then your demonstration or deduction, or his understanding be not clear, or he not learned, you may with a club dash out his brains, but never clear them. He then that believes the Scripture, can't but believe what you cleerly demonstrate from Scripture, if he hath clear brains; if he hath not, your force may puzle and pudle his brains more by the passion of anger and hatred, make him abhor you and your arguments, but never lovingly embrace you or them: and thus you may hazard his Soul by hatred, and your own Soul also by provoking him to it, but never save his Soul by a true belief. But perchance you will conclude, he doth not believe the Scripture, because he doth not believe your arguments from Scripture; (a strange conclusion) but what then? would you, can you force him to believe the Scripture? can you drive faith like a nail into his head or heart with a hammer? nay, 'tis not in a mans own power to make himself believe any thing farther then his reason shews him, much less divine things; this is the peculiar work of Grace; and if Faith be the gift of God, your Argument cannot give it, nor your Hammer force it; Arguments may be good Inducements, and if right, will prevail with those to believe whom God hath ordained to Eternal Life, but no other; Preaching the Word is the means God himself hath appointed, but as for force, I can't find in the Gospel either commandment or countenance given for it. If the Scripture command to speak the truth in love, to instruct our Brother in the spirit of meekness, if we are to pray and beseech him to receive the grace of God, can any thing be more contrary to Scripture Rule, than force and violence? to what purpose then is force, since it cannot make him believe the Gospel? and if he doth believe the Gospel, he will, I am sure, he cannot chuse but believe what you clearly shew him is contained there (supposing his brain to be clear); and I am also sure, if he believe what is clearly contained, he need not believe any thing else. The Scripture is our Rule of Faith compleat and full, the Scripture it self tells us so, *John* 20. 31. *These things are writen that you might believe, and believing ye might have life*; and our Saviour tells us, *That in them we have Eternal Life*, *John* 5. 39, and the 2d. *Tim.* 3. 15. *St. Paul* tells us, *The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*; *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for Instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished nnto all good works*. And I beseech all men further to consider what is said, *Deut.* 12. 32. *Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it*; and likewise how they will avoid the Curse in the last of the *Revelations*, if they add to the words there written; and surely 'tis the same Crime to add to any other Book of Scripture. If it be answered, They do not require us to believe it to be Scripture. I reply, They require men to believe it as Scripture, with Divine Faith, which is as bad, they make their own words equal with Gods word; or if they say, they require not Divine Faith, then I am sure it is no matter of Salvation whether I believe

it or no, humane Faith cannot save. Thus you see how impertinent, how irrational, how impious it is, to require a man to believe any thing more than is clearly contained in Scripture; and if it be clearly contained there, he that believes Scripture and sees it clearly contained there, can't but believe it; if he do not see it clearly contained there, you can't force either his sight or his Faith. Your force may make him blinder, but never see clearer; may make him an Hypocrite, no true Convert.

Again, I desire all men soberly to consider. Are not the prime and most necessary Principles of Faith, the Trinity, three Persons and one God, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the same person to be God and Man, the Resurrection of the Dead, that we shall rise with the same Body, when one body may be eaten and converted into several bodies, and such like: Are they not things far above the highest reason and sharpest understanding that ever had Man; yet we believe them, because God (who cannot lye) hath declared them: is it not then a strange thing for any man to take upon him to declare one tittle more of them then God hath declared, seeing we understand not what is declared; I mean we have no comprehensive knowledge of the matter declared, but only a believing knowledge, our Faith not our Reason reaches it: the Apostles by the Scriptures teach us this, not the Schooles by Syllogismes. If then our Reason understands not what is declared, How can we by Reason make any deduction by way of Argument from that which we understand not? As for Example. Some hold, That the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son; some, that he proceeds from the Father by the Son. I pray, Doth any man understand how the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, from the Son, or by the Son? no certainly, how then can he affirm or believe a tittle more of the Holy Ghost than the Holy Ghost hath declared? Seeing, as I said, He understands not at all what is declared. Discourse must be of things intelligible, though Faith believes things not intelligible. Can any man prove, that rotation and circulation are all one, who understands not what rotation or circulation is? the like may be said of procession or mission of the Holy Ghost. The Scripture plainly tells, That the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, and that he is sent by the Father, that he is sent also by the Son but whether he proceeds from the Son or by the Son, the Scripture is silent, and I am therefore ignorant, having no knowledge at all of any Divine Mysteries but from the Scriptures. I grant, That by rational deductions and humane way of argumenting, 'tis probable, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as from the Father; but if in Divine matters we once give way to humane deductions, a cunning Sophister may soon lead a weak Disputant into many Errours. By humane deductions you may infer, that the Son is inferiour to the Father as begotten by him, the Holy Ghost inferiour to both, being sent by both; with us the less is sent by the greater; by humane deduction from three distinct persons you may prove three distinct substances; I hope you will make no such inferences in the Divine Persons. Again, What a business have the School-Men made about these words of our Saviour; *This is My Body:* with

their

their *prædicatum*, and *subjectum*, and *copula*, and *individuum vagum*, in the pronoun *This*. Innumerable are their intricate Impertinencies in this matter, and in their concluſions; The Papiſts hold Chriſt to be preſent in the Sacrament *Tranſubſtantialiter*; the *Lutherans*, *Conſubſtantialiter*; the *Calviniſts*, *Sacramentaliter*; and yet all confeſs they underſtand none of theſe wayes; as St. *Paul* ſaith, *Deſiring to be Teachers they underſtand not what they ſay, neither whereof they affirm*, 1 Tim. 1. 7. Had the Scripture affirmed any of theſe wayes, we ought to have ſubmitted our Reaſon in things above Reaſon though we underſtand them not, and 'tis reaſonable ſo to do; but to go about to prove by reaſon what is above reaſon, is wonderful; and to diſcourſe of what we underſtand not, is doubtleſs a ſpice of madneſs, and the concluſions we draw from ſuch diſcourſes, muſt needs be very dangerous, we following the *ignem fatuum*, the uncertain light of Humane reaſon in Divine matters, ſo totally beyond our reach: Wherefore we have no other ſafe way to ſpeak of Divine matters but in Scripture Language, *ipſiſſimis verbis*, with the very ſame words, according to that, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words which thou haſt heard of me in Faith*: Mark, *Hold faſt* not onely the matter of Faith, but *the form of ſound words*, theſe are ſafe, humane words in divine and high Myſteries are dangerous; Man can no more ſet them forth in humane words, than expreſs the Divine ſubſtance by humane painting, 'tis the ſole work of the Holy Ghoſt who is alſo Divine.

There hath not been a greater plague to Chriſtian Religion than School-Divinity, where men take upon them the liberty to propoſe new Queſtions, make nice diſtinctions and raſh concluſions of Divine matters, toſſing them up and down with their Tongues like Tennis Balls; and from hence proceed all the dangerous Hereſies, and cruel bickerings about them, falling from words to blows. The firſt Divinity School we read of, was ſet up at *Alexandria* by *Pantænus*, and from thence ſoon after ſprang forth that damnable Hereſie of the *Arrians*, which over-ran all Chriſtendom, and was the cauſe of deſtruction to many Millions of Chriſtians both Body and Soul. The Hereſies before this were ſo groſs and ſenſual, that none took them up but diſſolute or frantick people, and ſoon vaniſh't; but after this School ſubtile way of arguing was brought into Chriſtianity, Hereſie grew more refined, and ſo ſubtile, that the plain and Pious Fathers of the Church knew not how to lay hold of it and repreſs it, the School diſtinctions and evaſions quite baffled them: and theſe Sophiſters, proud of their conqueſt, triumphed and carried away a ſpecious appearance of Truth as well as Learning, (or rather cunning) inſomuch that many godly perſons were alſo deluded and fell in unto them, and many of their Hereſies continue unto this day. This great bane of the Church took it's riſe from hence; Many of the Primitive Doctors and Fathers being converted from Heatheniſme, and having by long and great Induſtry acquired much knowledge in natural Philoſophy, Antiquity, Hiſtory, and ſubtill Logick or Sophiſtry, were very unwilling to abandon quite theſe their long ſtudied and dearly

dearly beloved Sciences, (falſly ſo called) and therefore tranſlated them into Chriſtianity, applying their School terms, diſtinctions, Syllogiſmes, &c. to Divine matters; intending perchance, through indiſcreet zeal, to illuſtrate and imbelliſh Chriſtian knowledge with ſuch artificial forms and figures, but rather defaced and ſpoyled it; which the wiſdome of St. *Paul* well foreſaw, and therefore forewarned us of it; *Col.* 2. 8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoyl you through Philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Chriſt.* I humbly conceive it had been far better for them, and all Chriſtendome, had they determined with St. *Paul, To know nothing but Chriſt and him Crucified*; and not to intermingle mans Wiſdome and excellency of ſpeech with Divine Knowledge and Scripture Doctrine, which is to be taught *by the demonſtration of the Spirit and of power*, as is ſet forth 1 *Cor.* 2. not with Logical Syllogiſms and Sophiſtical Enthymems; for as the wiſdome of God was fooliſhneſs to the *Greeks* and Gentiles, ſo the wiſdome of the Greeks and Gentiles was fooliſhneſs to God, and deſtruction to his Church; who by the fooliſhneſs of preaching had overcome all their wiſdome, and captivated their underſtandings in obedience to the Faith. But when the Chriſtian Doctors left this plain and ſimple way of preaching, and fell to cunning diſputing, introducing new forms of ſpeech and nice expreſſions of their own coyning, ſome approving, ſome oppoſing them, great Diſcords, Warrs and Confuſions ſoon followed. Had that moſt Prudent and moſt Pious *Conſtantine* the firſt and beſt of Chriſtian Emperours, had he purſued his own intentions to ſuppreſs all diſputes and all new queſtions of God the Son, both *Homoouſian* and *Homoiouſion*, and commanded all to acquieſce in the very Scripture expreſſions without any addition, I am confident the *Arrian* Hereſie had ſoon expired; but by continual diſputation the heat of Paſſion was raiſed, and the matter purſued with far more violence, which at length grew into rancour and malice irreconcileable: For ſome Godly Biſhops (I humbly conceive more zealous than diſcreet) would not reſt ſatisfied unleſs the *Arrians* were forced either to ſubſcribe to the new word *Homoouſian*, or to quit their Livings; and this cauſed that great Perſecution againſt the Orthodox, where the *Arrians* prevailed; whereas by ſilence impoſed on all parties, the malice, rancour, perſecution, warr, all had been prevented, and *the Truth ſpoken in love*, would at length moſt probably have prevailed: For, was not the Goſpel at firſt planted this way? preaching, and praying men to receive it? by this way of weakneſs it prevailed; for *the weak things of God are ſtronger than men.* But when men will be wiſer than God, and in their fooliſh wiſdome think it fit to adde their ſtrength to Gods weakneſs, as a ſpeedier and ſurer way to eſtabliſh the Truth, God to convince them of their folly, ſuffers that ſtrong man the Enemy of the Goſpel (whom none but his Almighty Arm can bind and maſter) to come and ſowe his tares of diviſion which ſoon over-runs the good ſeed of the Church, and brings all to confuſion.

But

But what then? would I have all heretical Opinions broach'd and ſpread abroad without any controul? Are not Princes and Magiſtrates to be Nurſing Fathers unto the Church? muſt they not adde the Power of the Sword to that of the Word? *Not hold the Sword in vain, but for the puniſhment of evil Doers*, &c? All this I grant, and deſire as much as any man, that both Prince and Paſtor would hold faſt *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, fully declared and contained in Scripture; let them ſuffer no new Doctrine to be ſet on foot, certainly ſuperfluous, (the Scripture being alſufficient) and probably dangerous, as being of Man, and not of God, who having given us a compleat Rule of Faith and Life, by his Prophets, Apoſtles, and his only Son, we have no reaſon to believe any New Doctrine proceeds from him; therefore St. *Paul* is very bold, and cryeth out, *If an Angel from Heaven Preach unto you any other Goſpel than is already preached, let him be accurſed.* The Magiſtrate then is to countenance and protect the Paſtor preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt, to ſilence, oppoſe, puniſh all that preach any thing contrary, or not clearly contained in the Goſpel. Hereſies never at firſt appear in their own natural ſhape, but diſguiſed with ſpecious pretences drawn from ſome obſcure places of Scripture, capable of various Interpretations, and thus having gotten footing, by degrees they lay aſide their Diſguiſes, and march on bare-fac'd. Therefore both Paſtor and Magiſtrate ought to be very watchfull, and oppoſe all beginnings ever ſo ſpecious, as dangerous, or at leaſt ſuperfluous, as I ſaid. Let the Paſtors at firſt endeavour by plain and ſound Doctrine to ſtop the mouths of Gainſayers; but if theſe turbulent ſpirits will not be ſtop't, neither by Admonitions nor Entreaties, then let the Paſtors proceed to the Power of the Keyes; which, were it uſed with that Gravity and Severity as it was in the Primitive times, would have great effect; that is, were it uſed in a ſolemn Aſſembly, by the Reverend Biſhop and his Clergy, (not by Lay-Chancellours and their Surrogates) and the perſon Excommunicated and ſhut out of the Church, were likewiſe excluded from all Converſation and Commerce, every one ſhunning his company as a perſon infected with the Plague, (ſo it was of Old, and ſo it ought to be now, and ſo it would be now, if men made any Conſcience of their wayes) this I am confident would reduce many a one: But if after this any perſevere in their perverſneſs, then the Magiſtrate may doubtleſs by his Power, uſed with Chriſtian moderation, endeavour to ſtop the ſpreading of the Contagion, and do what in wiſdom he thinks meet to preſerve the purity and peace of Church and State, urging againſt them that Scripture, *Haſt thou Faith, have it to thy ſelf before God, Rom.* 14. 22. Or that, *Give none offence neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. Or that, *Gal.* 5. 12. *I would they were even cut off that trouble you.* *St. Paul* was not here in jeaſt, but in great earneſt, as appears by his continued fervency all along this Epiſtle; and doubtleſs he means not here a cutting off from the Church by way of Excommunication, for that was in his power to do; why then ſhould he wiſh it? nay, they had cut themſelves off from the Church before; certainly then he means a cutting off by the Civil Power,

Power, which then was Heathen, and therefore St. *Paul* would not have it made use of by Christians; for he would not allow them to appeal to unbelieving Magistrates, no not in Civil things, 1 *Cor.* 6. much less in Spiritual things. Wherefore when St. *Paul* wishes they were cut off, he wishes there were a fitting Power, that is, a Christian Magistrate to punish or banish those that trouble the Church of Christ with Doctrines apparently contrary to the clear Text, and such as are destructive to Christianity; I dare go no farther. But as for those who keep their erroneous Opinions to themselves, who neither publish nor practise any thing to the disturbance of the Church or State, but onely refuse to conform to the Churches established Doctrine or Discipline, pardon me if I say, that really I cannot find any warrant, or so much as any hint from the Gospel, to use any Force to compell them; and from Reason sure there is no Motive to use Force; because, (as I shewed before) Force can't make a man believe your Doctrine, but onely as an Hypocrite, Profess what he believes not.

I know full well there is a common Objection against this, taken from St. *Austin*, who was long of my Opinion, but seems to be altered on this occasion. Some Hereticks *Donatists*, came to him in his latter dayes, and gave thanks, that the Civil Power was made use of to restrain them; confessing, that was the Means which brought them to consider more calmly their own former extravagant Opinions, and so brought them home to the true Church. This Objection is easily answered. First, the *Donatists* are well known to have been a Sect, not onely erroneous in Judgment, but very turbulent in Behaviour, alwayes in seditious practices; and in that case I shew'd before how the Civil Magistrate may proceed to Punishment; but our case is not in repressing seditious Practices, but Enforceing a Confession of Faith, quite of another nature. Then secondly, to answer more particularly this story, I suppose there is no man such a stranger to the world, as to be ignorant that there are Hypocrites in it; and such (for ought we know) these seeming converted *Donatists* might be, who for love of this World more than for love of the Truth, forsook their heretical Profession, though not their Opinion; who, conscious to themselves of their own dissimulation, and desirous to get favour with St. *Austin*, a Person of great Veneration and Authority with all, related unto him this specious Story, which St. *Austin*'s great Charity was apt to believe, as St. *Paul* saith, *believeth all things*; and from hence concludeth, that it might be lawfull to use the Power of the Civil Sword to reduce Hereticks to the Church. But unless it can be evidenced that these *Donatists* Hearts were changed as well as their Profession, (a thing impossible to prove) all this proves nothing. Thirdly, Put the Case their Hearts were really changed as to matter of Belief, 'tis evident their Hearts were very worldly still, groveling on the Earth, not one step nearer Heaven; our Saviour saith, *An evil Tree can't bring forth good Fruit*, and sure their Heart was evil, which was far more moved for the quiet enjoyment of this Worlds good, than for the blessed enjoyment of Christ. Fourthly, Though we farther grant, that the pruning of the Magistrates Sword did

really

really correct the vitiousness of the Tree, and made it bring forth some good Fruit, yet shall *we do evil, that good may come of it? God forbid*, saith St. *Paul*. Put the case *Malchus* had been converted by St. *Peters* cutting off his Ear, this would not have excused St. *Peters* act, which our Saviour so sharply reproved and threatned with perishing by the Sword, and gave him the reason why he ought not to use the Sword in his cause; *Thinkest thou that I cannot pray unto my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels*? Canst thou do any thing more prejudicial to the honour of my God-head, than to think I want the help of Man to defend me? And according to this may our Saviour say; Thinkest thou that I cannot pray unto my Father, and he shall give me more than twelve millions of Souls to worship my Name? or canst thou do any thing to eclipse more the power and glory of the Gospel, which I have ordained to be set up by weakness and foolishness of Preaching, and thereby to subdue both the wisdom of the *Greeks*, and the power of the *Gentiles*: As I my self have conquered all Enemies by preaching and suffering, so must my Disciples tread in my steps. And just so we find that the Gospel was most miraculously advanced over all the World by preaching and suffering for it, not by compelling others to it. 'Tis evident that upon preaching of the Gospel, as many as were ordained to God by Eternal Life, believed: and surely those who are not ordained by God to Eternal Life, can never be brought thither by the ordinance or power of Man: wherefore when the Ministers have preached and prayed, they have performed all they can do, the rest must be left to the Justice or Mercy of God, *who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*; so, that the sharpest Sword in this world shall enter their hard heart more than an *Adamant*.

All this I say in reference to compelling Men to believe or conform, still reserving to the Magistrate power, according to Scripture, *To punish evil doers*, not evil believers, not who think, but) do publish or do practice something to subvert the Fundamentals of Religion, or disturb the Peace of the State, or injure their Neighbour. God, the only searcher of hearts, reserves unto himself the punishment of evil thoughts, of evil belief, which Man can never have a right cognizance of, for the greatest Professor may be the greatest *Atheist*. But the Magistrate shall conceive he hath sufficient warrant to punish also evil believers, and shall proceed to execution, or on that pretence shall punish true believers; the Scripture is most clear, that the Subject is bound to submit and bear it with all Christian patience, to the loss of Goods, Liberty, or Life, not only patiently to bear it, but rejoyce in it; and I am sure if he hath any true Religion, and right understanding in him, he will rejoyce on his own behalf, because his *reward is exceeding great*: Therefore whoever under pretence of Religion raises any Tumult, or takes up Armes against the Magistrate

to preserve himself from persecution, absolutely declares himself, either a stark Fool, or a stark *Atheist*; either he believes there is no such reward, or is mad to reject the opportunity of gaining it; and so at the best is fit for *Bedlam*, at the worst for the *Gallowes*; now let him choose.

An Appendix to the former Subject.

BEfore I leave this matter of imposing new Articles of Faith, I desire to speak a word or two concerning the authority of Councels and Fathers in relation to it.

When the Superstitions and the Abuses of the *Popish* Church, especially in the matter of *Indulgences* grew so very gross, as not longer to be endured, *Luther, Melancthon, Oecolompadius, Bucer*, & divers others opposed them; and coming to dispute with their Adversaries about these things, the *Popish* Doctors having no Scripture for their Errors, quoted several Fathers and Councils, to give countenance unto them. The *Evangelical Doctors* (so called, because they chiefly urged *Evangelium* the *Gospel* for the defence of their Doctrine) were most of them bred up from their Infancy in the *Popish* Church, and therein taught even to adore all Councils and Fathers, and (education being of great force to command and awe both the Wills and Judgments of Men) made them very shie and timorous to reject that authority, which they had long reverenced; in modesty therefore some of the *Evangelical Doctors* were content to admit the authority of Fathers and Councils for three or four of the first Centuries, some admitted five or six, whereby they were reduced sometimes to great streights in their Disputations: for though neither all nor half the *Popish* Errors can be found in the Councils and Fathers of these Centuries, yet some of them were crept very early into the Church. This Superstition of the *Cross* and *Chrysme* were in use in the second Century: The *Milenary* Error got footing about that time; the necessity of Infants receiving the Blessed Sacrament of the Lords Supper came in soon after: About the fourth Century there was some touches in Oratory Sermons by way of Rhetorical Ejaculations like praying to Saints, but long after came to be formally used as now in Churches; and so Superstitions came in some at one time, and some at another. The *Papists* themselves do not receive all these Errors, but reject some, as that of the *Millenaries*, and the necessity of Infants receiving the Lords Supper. Now I ask first the *Papists* by what rule they retain some of these things, and reject others? Secondly, I ask the *Evangelical*, by what rule they submit to the authority of four Centuries, and refuse others? Both will answer me, Because they believe some to be erroneus some to be Orthodox. Whereby 'tis evident that neither submit to the Fathers authority, as comanding their Judgments, but receive their Opinions as agreeing with their Judgments, this is evidently true and clearly rational, and fully agrees with the Rules

given by some of the Fathers, as St. *Cyprian* and St *Austin*, two as generally and as deservedly reverenced as any in the Christian Church. St. *Cyprian* tells us, that the very *Præpositus* (which we call *Bishop*) is to be guided by his own reason and conscience, and is responsible only to God for his Doctrine. St. *Austin* tells us, that he submits to no Doctor of the Church ever so learned, ever so holy, any further than he proves his doctrine by Scripture or reason, and desires none should do otherwise by him; this is plain and rational dealing; had the Evangelical Doctors taken this course in the beginning, they had saved themselves from many intricate troubles which their in-bred over-revence to antiquity entangled them in: But sure they needed not have been so scrupulous in this matter, seeing there is scarce any one Father whose authority the Papists themselves do not in some particular or other reject, though other whiles when he speaks for them, they try it up to that height, as if it were even a matter of damnation not to submit unto it. I say not this as if I would have antiquity wholly rejected, by no means, but to consult the Fathers with great regard as Expositors of Scriptures, and attentively observe what they shew us from thence. I am not of those who admire the great knowledge in divine matters revealed in this later Age of the world, I do not think there are any now so likely to discover the truth of Gospel mysteries as those of antient dayes. As for that saying, A Pigme set on a Giants shoulder, may see more than the Giant: pardon me if I call it a shallow and silly fancy, nothing to our purpose; for our question is not of seeing more, but of the clear discerning and judging those things we all see, but are in doubt what they mean: if a Pigme and a Giant see a Beast at a miles distance, and are in dispute whether it be a Horse or an Oxe, the Pigme set on the Giant shoulder, is never the nearer discerning what it is, which depends on the sharpness of sight, not the height of his shoulders: Now that the antient and holy Fathers of the Church were more spiritual, and consequently sharper sighted in spiritual things than we carnal creatures of this later age, is evident by their Spiritual holy Lives: *The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. And how natural, how carnal, how purblind we are, is too too visible. Besides, a purblind man near the object, will discern it better than a much sharper sight at greater distance as we are: For if you ask those lofty conceited Pigmes, why they give more credit to the Fathers of the second and third Century, than to those of the sixth or seventh; they answer, Because those that lived nearer the dayes of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, are likelyer to know their minds better than those of remoter and corrupted Ages; the reason is good, but mightily confounds those who live at the very foot of the Hill in the valley of darkness and all Iniquity, and therefore not so likely to discern the truth of the doctrine of *Christ*, preach't on the top of Mount *Sion*, as those who lived in higher ascents. Wherefore I shall alwayes hearken with due reverence unto what those Primitive Holy Fathers deliver, and the more holy and

more ancient, doubtless more to be regarded. And yet seeing that *Irenæus*, and before him *Papias*, held to be a Disciple of St. *John* the *Apostle*, taught the error of the *Millenaries*, rejected now by all the Church, why might not others do so as well as they? and therefore there can be no certainty of their Doctrine farther than they shew us clearly from Scripture, which ought to be our only Rule of Faith, as I shewed before. But in any point of Religion, either of Faith or Discipline, if after diligent and humble search of Scripture, the matter be doubtful, then certainly I would so much reverence antiquity as to embrace what I found approved of by the greater number of antient Fathers; and what I found generally approved by them, though my own judgement did much incline to the contrary, yet I would receive it, unless it appeared to me flatly opposite to Scripture, which we believe to be the Word of God; then it were damnation in me to forsake that, and hearken to the words of Fathers on earth, or Angels coming from Heaven, till they could make me understand their word agreed with Gods Word. I must be saved by Faith in God and *Christ*, and not by faith in Men or Angels. And now I shall be bold to make this assertion; That the Man who reads Scripture humbly and attentively, fasts and prayes to God earnestly, consults his Pastors and Teachers carefully and modestly, and yet after all continues in some error by blind ignorance and mistake of Scripture (if such a thing was, or ever will be suffered by the infinite goodness of God) that Man shall sooner be saved, than he who receives a true opinion from the authority of Men, which he soberly conceives to be contrary to Scripture; for 'tis all one to him, as if it were really so; all things are unclean to him that believes them unclean, so all things are damnable to him that believes them damnable, as he must do who believes them flatly contrary to Scripture. Let no man count me a libertine in faith, because I would neither compel, nor be compelled to submit to the Doctrines of Men. I trust in God, no Man shall out-go me in zealous *contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, once for all, never to receive any new Doctrine, any other Gospel than that preached by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, herein I am no Libertine; by God's gracious assistance, neither Men nor Angels shall make me recede from one tittle of this, nor to embrace with divine faith one tittle more than this, for doubtless it is far greater Idolatry to believe in Man, than to sacrifice to Man, more to give him my heart, than my hand. And yet notwithstanding all this, no Man is forwarder than my self to receive from others humane doctrines as humane; that is, I believe it is not only possible but probable also, that another may have more natural understanding, more acquired learning than my self, and so may find out that in Scripture, or from Scripture, or by reason, which I cannot do my self, but yet I can have no possible assurance that the Doctrine he delivers to me is absolutely true, because I have assurance that 'tis possible for him to erre, and then I can have no assurance but that he may erre in that very Doctrine he

he now delivers me: There is no man I ever heard or read of, to whom I could more readily submit than to St. *Austin*, a person of wonderful sharpness in understanding, and yet of great modesty; no way affecting to take new Opinions, much less to impose them on others. Now I pray consider, how can we have assurance of any Doctrine he delivers more than another, I mean assurance from his own authority or reason (what he delivers from Scripture authority is another matter;) we believe St. *Austin* erred in some things whereof he was most confident; he believed it absolutely necessary for Children to receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, as I say'd; he believed it a direct heresie to hold there were any *Antipodes*: *Lactantius* another great Wit and great Scholar, believed the like, with divers others. Who then can doubt but that they might be mistaken in other things also. Wherefore let God be true, and all men lyars, in this sense, to deliver lyes materially; that is, falsities for truths.

What I have said of Fathers, must certainly hold good of Councels also, though ever so general, ever so Primitive; for this and that Father may, and have erred; surely then that and that may also erre: I can have no assurance in Men, nor can I be saved by faith in Men. The general Objection made against this, is, The promise which *Christ* made unto his Church, *That the gates of Hell should not prevail against it, and that he would be with the Apostles unto the Worlds end.* As for that other saying of our Saviour, *He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen and a Publican,* I can't but wonder that Men of any brains or modesty should so grosly abuse this saying; spoken of several differences between Man and Man, to be referred to the termination of the Church, that is, the Congregation of the Faithful, which they usually and by order should assemble in; and refer this to the Church in general matters of Faith, not in the least pointed at there. Wherefore I pass this over as very impertinent, and proceed to answer the former Objection of more weight, yet no way concluding as they would have it; No Man in the Christian World can more firmly believe than I do, That the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, and that *Christ* will be with his Church unto the end of the World; but I do not believe, nor am I bound by Scripture to believe such Expositions as the *Popish* Church makes of this place. By what authority doth the *Romish* Church challenge to themselves to be Expositors of Scriptures more than other Churches? I find nothing for it in Scripture, which is my Rule of Faith. I proceed then to the business of general Councels. Whether they may erre in some points of Faith; and why not? All the Evangelical Doctors grant the later general Councels have erred; if so, why not the former? what promise had the former from *Christ* more than the later? what period is there set in Scripture for their not erring, or what promise is there at all for any not to erre? *The gates of Hell shall*

not

not prevail against the Church, I grant, what's this to a General Council? not the thousand part of the Clergy, not the thousand thousand part of the Church, which in Scripture is alwayes put for the whole Body of the Faithful, though of late it be translated into quite another notion, and taken for the Clergy only. But you will say a General Councel is the representative of the whole Church: what then? what promise is made in Scripture that the representative shall not erre? You further urge, If the representative erre, 'tis probable the whole Church will receive their errour. I answer, We are now treating of matter of Faith, which must not depend on humane probabilities, but Divine certainties; besides, 'tis not so probable the Church will receive the error of the representative. We know the whole Church hath not received a Truth determined by them, much less an errour. And I pray, have not Councels been against Councels? Put then the case, a General Councel should erre in some matters, you can't therefore say the whole Church hath erred, the gates of Hell have prevailed against the Church. I pray consider, can you truly say, the *Great Turk* hath prevailed against the Christian Army, because he hath kill'd the thousand part of it? and yet the greatest General Councel holds a less proportion to the whole Church. But I will grant yet more: Put the case the whole Church should deviate into some erroneous Superstitions, had the Devil therefore prevailed against it? Can I say I have prevailed against another Man because I gave him some slight hurt in his Leg or Thigh? as long as his Head, his Heart, his Arm are whole, he still is able to fight and wound me as bad or worse; till the Devil can so wound the whole body of the Church as to destroy the Vitals, the Fundamentals, and make it no Church, the gates of Hell can't be said to have prevailed against it. Now God be blessed there have continued all along several Churches as great or greater than the *Roman* Church, which have still maintained in defiance of Satan, *One God the Father of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things*, and several other sound Doctrines of Christianity; how then hath Satan prevailed, when so many millions have waged war against him, and upheld the Kingdom of God and his *Christ?* The Scripture plainly tells us, that in the dayes of *Anti-Christ*'s great power, the Church shall be driven into the wilderness, scarce visible in the world; neither *Pope*, nor Devil hath yet so prevailed, but as then *Christ* shall have, so *Christ* hath still had a Church warring against Satan. Sure no learned *Papist* will deny, but that about the second Century, the *Milleuaries* were far the greater part of the Church, scarce any writing Doctor in those dayes but had this error. Did Satan then prevail? And in St. *Austin*'s dayes the necessity of Infants receiving the Lords Supper was so general, and held so necessary a Principle, that it was made use of to prove the necessity of Infant Baptism, this Sacrament being to precede the other: in those dayes a Lanthorn would have been necessary to find

out

out a Church without this error. Did Satan then prevail? But say you, No General Councel determined those errors; why? because none was called about them; had any been called, who can doubt but that they would have avowed that in the Councel, which they all taught in their Churches: No, the Spirit of God would have preserved them from it: Shew me that promise in Scripture; if Gods Spirit did not preserve them from teaching the whole Church so, I fear the Spirit would not have preserved them more in Council than in Congregation, where all sucking in this error from their Infancy, would hardly have quitted it by a determination in Council. I humbly crave pardon for this bold presumption, being lead into it by the bold assertion of the *Papists*, telling us without warrant how God will preserve their Councils from error, as if they had been of his Privy Council. We are not to search into Gods secret Counsels for what he will permit, or why he permits this or that. I search only into his declared Promises, and with all the search I can possiby make, I can't find any such promise to General Councils as not to erre; no, only that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church to destroy it, which he hath hitherto made good, and I am sure will to the end of the World; but beyond his promise I am not sure of any thing, though it seems ever so rational. God will not endure to be fettered with Sophistical Sophisms, and humane consequences; and therefore I am afraid to wander from his wise and holy Word, and trust to the Doctrine of Men seeming ever so wise, ever so holy; I reverence their Persons, but can't believe in their Doctrine. I am taught to believe only in God, not in the Church, much less in any member or Congregation or Council; but to believe the Holy Catholick Church, that is, that God hath had, now hath, and will have to the Worlds end, a select company of Faithful ones, confessing and serving him; To whom be honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

Concerning Ceremonies and Church Service.

First as to Ceremonies. I wonder Men of any tolerable discretion should be so eager either for or against them, our salvation no way depending on them but much hazarded by our contention about them, breaking *Peace*, the principal thing recommended to us by the Gospel of Peace; sure both are very sinful. For my part, I think all Subjects are bound in conscience to conform to the established Ceremonies of that Church, whereof they are Members, unless there be any thing flatly against the Word of God: for to disobey our Superiours is directly against the Word of God: 1. *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lords sake.* And therefore he

he that doth not submit, had need have as clear an evidence out of Scripture, that the thing he rejects is directly contrary to the Word of God, otherwise he breaks an evident Commandment to satisfy himself in a doubtful thing, which without doubt is damnable. St. *Paul* requires one Brother to yield unto another in things indifferent, much more Children to Parents, Subjects to Governours. But no man that knows this World can expect all Children, all Subjects, will be dutiful and obedient; and therefore as Children are to obey their Parents, so Parents ought not to provoke their Children to disobedience, by imposing unnecessary things and very offensive: Yet if they do impose such things, the Children are bound to obey, unless the things imposed be offensive to God also, then they are acquitted, not otherwise. But still Parents must remember they are to give accompt to God for their commands, as Children are for their obedience: And setting this aside, Nature alone should prompt Parents to seek the love of their Children, especially spiritual Parents, styl'd the *Ministers of God, who is love:* Should not they desire rather to lead the people into the House of God by love, than whip them in by fear, to have their Churches full rather than empty; to put on such a habit as would invite them in, and not such as will fright them out. What wise and loving Father would put on a winding sheet on his head, to fright his weak and simple Child: I say this to the chief Rulers of the Church, not to inferior Ministers, who must observe the Constitutions of the Chief, and the Chief ought to consider the disposition of inferiours, what will be most edifying for them. As the Apostles in the beginning of *Christianity* continued the observing not eating of blood, and things strangled, to comply with the *Jews*: so the Surplice with other things was wisely and piously retained by the reformers from *Popery*, when probably many long nourished up in those *Ceremonies*, would not have come in to the Church, had all these been cast out; but now to be zealous, for them when the People are so passionate against them, savours more of passion likewise in Governours than Religion; as if they had rather shew their Authority than their Charity. If they answer, That many of their Flock are as zealous for these things, as others against them, and they had rather gratifie the Obedient Conformers, than the disobedient Gain-sayers: I reply; First, This is no Obedience to conform to such Ordinances of their Superiours as they have a passion for; the Superiours in this conform rather to them, than they to their Superiours: Try their Obedience if they will submit to the taking of these things away, and then you may have more reason to gratify them; yet you know you are rather to bear with the infirmities of the weak, than please the strong. Love your friends most, value the Obedient most; but love your Enemies also, endeavour to gain the disobedient also: The first are your dutiful Sons, abide alwaies with you, all that you have is theirs; but yet when the *Prodigal* the stray returns, rejoyce and kill the fatted Calf; yea, if he will not return, leave the ninety

ninety and nine, and go seek that one that is lost. But you have no hopes of gaining him, you believe 'tis not Conscience but Faction, and wilful perverseness keeps him off; Oh do not despair, believe better of him; *Charity hopeth all things, believeth all things.* But you know it is so with him; then pity him the more going headlong into Hell, yield the more to save his Soul from Hell, *overcome evil with good*, fetter him, bind him fast with chains of love, what is stronger then love? it will overcome Schism, Faction, Sedition, any thing; it will overcome God himself, and even force God to withhold him by his merciful and powerful hand; and thus converting this perverse *sinner from the error of his way, you will save his soul alive and cover the multitude of your sins*; a blessed and joyful work whereat the Angels of Heaven will rejoyce and sing *Alleluja, Amen.* Oh my Fathers! my Fathers! that should Preach and Practice the Gospel of Peace and Love to your Children, vouchsafe at my humble request to read *Rom.* 14. See what great liberty that great Grand-father of the Church allows his Children, and observe in the general how he became all things to all men to gain some; and will not you in some things comply to gain all? will you restrain the liberty of the Gospel to the rigidity of your Discipline to lose some, to lose many, and perchance in the end to loose all, your selves and all. Be pious, be charitable, be prudent, build your Church on a Rock that will endure stormes, and not on the sand of Ceremonies that will both raise stormes and probably overturn your Church e're long. But you will say, If you yield to some dissenters in this, you must as well yield to others in that, and so by degrees abolish all your Ceremonies: I beseech you, is not the body more then rayment, substance more then Ceremony, will not you quit the later to preserve the former? but you will preserve both, God grant you lose not both. But you will say, This is the way to lose both; first take away Ceremonies, thereby you displease and loose your Friends, and then lye exposed to your Enemies to spoil your Goods. If your Goods be the substance of your Religion, and you preserve your Ceremonies to preserve these, then really my fear of your loosing all is encreas'd; this is a very sandy and dirty foundation, can't hold out against stormes; but if Faith, Hope and Charity be the substance of your Religion, (as I hope it is) these stood firm and encreased in the primitive times, in the greatest stormes, when the whole world of Jews and Gentiles were enemies to the Church, and not one of your Ceremonies in the Church to preserve it: the simple naked Truth without any Surplice to cover it, without any Ecclesiastical Policy to maintain it, overcame all, and so would do now, did we trust to that and the Defender of it. Perchance I appear a great Enemy to the Surplice so often naming that, I confess I am, would you know why? not that I dislike, but in my own Judgment much approve a pure White Robe on the Ministers shoulders, to put him in mind what purity becomes a Minister of the Gospel. But such dirty nasty Surplices as most of them wear, and

especially the singers in Cathedrals (where they should be most decent) is rather an intimation of their durty lives, and have given my Stomack such a surfet of them, as I have almost an aversness to all: and I am confident had not this decent habit been so undecently abused, it had never been so generally loathed.

I will name another Ceremony which gives great offence, with greater reason, The bowing towards the Altar, which in my own judgment I allow and practice in some measure, when I come into such congregations as generally use it, avoiding still to give offence to any as far as I may with a safe conscience. I affirm 'tis a very fitting thing to shew reverence in the House of God, and to shew it by bowing as well as any other means, and to bow that way as well as any other way, and in bowing, if the congregation did it to the South or West, I should as readily conform to that. But you will say the primitive Christians, as we read, did generally bow towards the East (the primitive Christians did so I grant, but not the prime Primitive) what then? is this any obligation on us now? the Primitive did also use Chrysme or consecrated Oyl, yet we retain it not; it grew into an abuse, therefore left off, so hath this bowing towards the Altar by the Papists, supposing Christ corporally present there: and truly many of our Church-men, give great suspition to the people that they also believe some such thing, otherwise pray answer me; when a Minister at his entring into the Church hath bowed to shew his reverence in the House of God and when he ascends up to the Altar bows again, to shew some particular reverence in that place where that blessed Sacrament is consecrated (let this pass for good also, Though something may be said against it) yet I pray tell me, why the Reader passing from one side of the Church to the other, and the Minister passing from one end of the Altar to the other bows again? Surely in reverence to the King of Kings he supposes there sitting, who can imagine any other cause of his homage? and yet I verily believe this is not the cause, but meerly a causeless custome taken up one from another (the common beginning of all superstitions) having no reason for it, but much against it, giving thereby great scandal to weak ones, and ground of Slander to malicious ones, who lay hold on any occasions to accuse them of Papistry; for certainly 'tis done with little or no reason, or with a great deal of Superstition.

Now as to that grand debated Ceremony of kneeling at the Lords Supper I think there is no reason to condemn those that use it, nor much reason to press it on those that disuse it. Why? Are we not to perform this great act of devotion with all possible reverence? I grant it, but is this to be expest altogether in the outward posture of the body? if so, then your opposers thus retort it upon you: If outward humility be the thing you contend for, you ought to shew it to your God in the humblest way, and that is by prostrating rather then kneelng; but if inward Humility, sure that consists

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chiefly in obedience to what Christ commanded, and to do it as he practised it, who can doubt but this is the most perfect obedience? and you know when our Saviour instituted this blessed Sacrament, he gave this command in the close, Do this in remembrance of me; and sure he remembers our Saviour best who doth every thing as he did, both in Substance and Ceremony, and so we find the primitive Christians did, observing also to receive it at Supper, as our Saviour did; but when this grew into a sinful abuse, the ceremony was altered, to preserve the substance in more purity: so was kneeling abused by the Papists and turned into great Superstition, why not therefore changed in like manner. But you kneel without any superstition, you do not adore the Elements on the Table, as the Papists do, but *Christ* in Heaven. And so this man receives sitting and at supper without any irreverence, he doth it so meerly in obedience to *Christ*'s command, both in ceremony and substance, *Do this in remembrance of me.* But you do not conceive *Christ's* command extended to the Ceremonies, but only to the substance, and the Church hath expresly commanded kneeling as the more reverend Posture, therefore you ought to obey; I think so too: but this man conceives *Christ* command's both substance and ceremonies to be observed, and consequently conceives the Churches command contrary to Christs, therefore he ought not to obey till you can rectifie his judgment; if you can, then he ought to obey also; if you cannot, have patience with your weak Brother, require no more of him in this matter then Christ required of his disciples; sure Christ would not have allowed any unfitting posture; be not over-wise, nor over holy, condemn not that which Christ allowed. God is so infinitely gracious as to accept our poor devotions in any form, if but sincere in substance, nay though weak and frail in the substantial part, *he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax*, his tender Fatherly bowels yern upon his dear Children coming to him afar off. Oh then let us learn to be like minded, tender and compassionate to our weak brethren, admit them into Cods worship in any posture, if they come in sincerity of heart, reject not those whom God accepts.

I might go on thus to handle other Ceremonies, as, the Cross in Baptisme, the Ring in Marriage, &c. But I conceive it needless, the same reasons being applicable to all, and he that is once brought to be indifferent and unconcerned in one, will soon be so disposed to all. Wherefore I conclude this point of Ceremonies with St. *Paul*, *He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it; he that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks, and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth god thanks*: so he that kneeleth, kneeleth to the Lord, and he that kneeleth not to the Lord, he kneeleth not. And I desire you farther to observe this circumstance in St. *Paul*'s words; how he calls the zealous observer of Ceremonial matters, the weak Brother, and commands the strong not to despise him, it being really a des-

picable weakneſs and a childiſh or effeminate kind of Devotion to be zealous in any ceremonial obſervance, which maſculine ſpirits are apt to deſpiſe, but in Chriſtian charity ought rather to pity and bear the infirmities of others. Wherefore let us be the men of underſtanding, men in devotion, be zealous, and hold faſt the ſubſtantial parts of Religion, Piety, Juſtice, Temperance, Chaſtity, Truth, Sincerity, ſtand faſt for theſe, not recede one hairs breadth from theſe, keep but our ground and fight it out like men to death againſt all Powers and Principalities on earth, or under the earth, and let us leave it to women and Children to contend about Ceremonies, let it be indifferent to us, whether this, or that, or no Ceremony, whether kneel, or not kneel, bow, or not bow, Surplice, or not Surplice, Croſs or no Croſs, Ring, or no Ring, let us give glory to God in all, and no offence to our Brethren in any thing.

Now if any man would be ſo curious as to ask why St. *Paul* did not determine this point, whether they ſhould eat herbs only; or other meats alſo, whether regard a day or not, and ſo eſtabliſh Uniformity among them; I cannot imagine any other Reaſon, but meerly to teach us this charitable complyance with one another, as neceſſary a practice as any other. Man is a very tickliſh Animal to Govern, he will not always be guided by reaſon and authority, man hath a will as well as reaſon, and will have his own will in many things, even the godly: very few are found ſo entirely pious as wholly to deny themſelves, 'tis ſo high and ſharp a point of Religion, as you may break the heart ſtrings of many in winding them up ſo high, and thus crack all their Religion; perchance you would find it ſo your ſelves, had the Nonconformiſts the ſcrewing you up, as you them. Wherefore conſider your ſelves, leaſt ye alſo be tempted, be charitable to the weak, proceed not ſo ſeverely againſt them in your Courts of Judicature; but remember what St. *Paul* ſaith, *Coloſ.* 2. *Let no man judge you in meat, or drink, or in reſpect of an holy day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath dayes, which are a ſhaddow of things to come, but the body is of Chriſt*; will you then in reſpect of an Holy-day, Croſs in Baptiſme, ſtanding at the Creed, kneeling at the Sacrament, and the like, will you in reſpect of ſuch ſhadows, judge, excommunicate, ſentence to everlaſting flames, a Soul that holds of the body of Chriſt, believes all his holy Goſpel, accords with you in one Faith, one Baptiſme, who acknowledges the only true God Creator of Heaven and Earth, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent to be the Redeemer of Mankind, which our Saviour affirms, *To be Eternal Life*; will you condemn ſuch a one to Eternal Death? God forbid. My Reverend Fathers and Judges of the Church, I with St. *Paul Col.* 3. beſeech you, *Put on fatherly bowels of mercies kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long ſuffering* towards your poor weak Children, and ſo long as they hold faſt the body of Chriſt, be not ſo rigorous with them for ſhadows; if they ſubmit to you in ſubſtance, have patience

ence, though they do not submit in Ceremonies, and give me leave to tell you my poor Opinion; This violent pressings of Ceremonies hath, (I humbly conceive) been a great hindrance from embracing them, men fearing your intentions therein to be far worse then really they are, and therefore abhor them. Have you never observed a flock of Sheep forcibly driven over a narrow Bridge, the poor Sheep fearing they are going into some Pen or Slaughter, choose rather to leap into the River then go forwards: but drive them on gently and patiently, they will of themselves take the way you desire. Uniformity in Ceremony is a good and desirable thing, therefore endeavour it; but unity in Faith and Charity is better, and therefore if you cannot obtain that, be sure to preserve this; this is the one thing necessary, choose this better part if you cannot have both; for this force urging Uniformity in worship hath caused great division in Faith as well as Charity; for had you by abolishing some Ceremonies taken the weak Brethren into your Church, they had not wandred about after seducing Teachers, nor fallen into so many gross Opinions of their own, but being dayly catechised and instructed by your Orthodox, and sound Preaching, they would have followed you like good Sheep; whereas now they wander about into a hundred by-paths of errot, many whereof lead headlong to Hell. Now I beseech you in the fear of God set before your eyes the dreadful day of Judgment, when Christ on his Tribunal of Justice shall require an account of every word and deed, and shall thus question you; Here are several Souls who taking offence at your Ceremonies have forsaken my Church, have forsaken the Faith, have run into Hell, the Souls for which I shed my precious Blood; Why have you suffered this? nay, why have you occasioned this? will you answer, it was to preserve your Ceremonies? will not Christ return unto you, Are your Ceremonies more dear unto you then the Souls for which I dyed? who hath required these things at your hands? will you for Ceremonies, which you your selves confess to be indifferent, no way necessary unto Salvation, suffer your weak Brethren to Perish, for whom I dyed? Have not I shewed you how *David and his Souldiers were guiltless in eating the Shew-bread, which was not lawful but only for the Priests to eat*? If *David* dispenced with a Ceremony commanded by God to satisfie the hunger of his People, will not you dispence with your own Ceremonies to satisfie the Souls of my people, who are called by my Name, and profess my Name, though in weakness? Or will you tell Christ they ought to suffer for their own wilfulness and perverseness; who will not submit to the Laws of the Church as they ought; will not Christ return? Shall they perish for transgressing your humane Laws, which they ignorantly conclude erroneous, and shall not you perish for transgressing my Divine Laws, which you know to be good and holy? had I mercy on you, and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servants? with the same measure you meeted it shall

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be measured to you again: I tremble to go farther, but most humbly beseech you for Christs sake, endeavour to regain these stray sheep, for whom he shed his precious blood, and think it as great an advantage, as great an honour to you, as it was to St. *Paul*, to become all things to all men, that you may gain some, as doubtless you will many, though not all; and the few standers off will become the more convinced, and at long running wearied out and gained also. Thus having reduced all into one fold in true faith and Christian charity, the present generation will much forget, the succeeding generation will be wholly ignorant of these erronious fancies, and all animosities being quite exinguished, wholsome edifying Ceremonies may be easily introduc't again with comfort to all, which are now irksome and grievous to many. And so I pass on to the second matter; The Church Service contained in the Book of Common Prayer, whereof briefly, because what I said before may be applyed to this also.

Concerning Church Service.

I will not here enter into the dispute, whether it be lawful for a Church to have a set form of Prayer, supposing that there are none but either highly fanatick, or higly factious, that affirm it unlawful; and with such I have no reason to expect, that reasonable Arguments should prevail; for enough hath beeen already printed to this purpose. I may also suppose, that there is nothing contained in our Book of Common Prayer, that is directly contrary to the Word of God; for had there been any such thing, we should have heard of it long since, which I never yet did from any sober man. And truly I might in the third place suppose that (a Book of Common Prayer being no way contrary to the Word of God) the use of it is far more conducing to Piety, then to suffer extemporary prayer to be used generally in Churches; experience hath fully declared it in our late confused times, when a man should have heard in many Churches such extravagant, such wild, such rash, such blasphemous expressions, as would drive any sober conscientious person out of their Churches. Can you with reason expect it otherwise? when half the Churches in this Nation have not a tolerable maintenance to support men of parts and discretion fit to perform so solemn and holy an Office. Had we the holiness, the zeal, the charity, the humility of the Primitive times, when men forsook all the World & daily sacrificed their lives for the Service of God, we might hope that God would graciously pour down upon us, as he did on them, the special gifts of praying and prophecying, but now when most serve God for gain, and would neither open *nor shut the Church*

doors

doors for nought, as Malachi saith, we must not expect those gifts and graces. And therefore I conceive it absolutely necessary to have some form prescribed to be used by all; for were there liberty left to the more able and discreet, most would suppose themselves to be such (few discovering their own weakness;) and were it left to the Bishop to licence as he saw fit, it would prove a very great cause of our heart-burning among his Clergie, and hatred towards himself, yea and rebellion against him and the laws. But now in Christ I humbly beseech the Governours of the Church calmly to consider; Were it not better to have such a form of Service as would satisfie most. The Fathers of our Church (as I said before) when they reformed this Nation from Popery, were desirous to fetch off as many as they could, retaining for this cause all the Ceremonies and Forms of prayer they could with a good rectified conscience, and therefore they prescribed that form of second service to be said at the Altar, as carrying some resemblance to the Mass, then the peoples delight, which being now become the peoples hate, should for the same resemblance, according to the same rule of reason, be now taken away. We commend our Forefathers for doing piously and wisely, and yet we will not imitate them; they endeavoured to please and gain the people, we will needs displease and lose them: Certainly we cannot do our Forefathers a greater honour then to observe their rule of reason, to confirm to the Times; and therefore they are grosly mistaken who think it a dishonour to them for us to take away what they have established; when we keep close to the reason wherefore they did establish it: Wise Physitians by the same rule of reason prescribe things clean contrary according to the temper of their Patients, hot or cold, Some other things I could mention in the Book of Common Prayer (though no way ill in themselves) yet fit to be altered, and would obviously appear so to every wise man once resolved to compose such a form, as would take in most of this Nation, which I humbly conceive Governors should in conscience endeavour becoming all things to all men to gain some, though not all; yet happily gain all in process of time; for the reason before specified.

But though I desire such a form of Service, such Ceremonies also to be established, as may give most general satisfaction, yet I desire what is established may be generally observed, and not a liberty left (as some do propose) to add or detract Ceremonies or Prayers according to the various opinions and humours of men: for certainly this would cause great faction and division; those that are for Ceremonies would run from their own Church to others where they were used; others to some fine fancied Prayers of such as they approve of; and thus some Churches would be thronged, others deserted, and no account could be taken by the Pastor of this Congregation: Atheists also and Papists under pretence of frequenting other Churches would abandon all. This course (say you) would bring but few into the Church, and perchance drive some out, who having been long bred up to

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such and such Ceremonies, would have small devotion to frequent the Church; if all or many were abolished. To this I answer, That certainly his Religion is vain, that would abandon the Substance for want of the Ceremonies, which he acknowledgeth to be no way necessary, but only more satisfaction to his mind: Surely a very ignorant mind, who hath not learnt, *That obedience is better then sacrifice and whole burnt offerings*: And surely a very uncharitable mind, who would not leave ninety, and nine unnecessary Ceremonies, to bring one sinful strayed Sheep into the Congregation, and convert him from the error of his non conforming way. I profess I am amazed to see how many men of a very good sence in most things, so zealously erroneous in this business of Religion, seeing the scripture so plainly declares, that nothing so covers the multitude of our sins as an act of charity; nothing so acceptable unto God, so joyful to his holy Angels, as conversion of a sinner. Yet these men will most passionately (and pardon me if I say most uncharitably and irreligiously) cry, away with these Idiot Sectaries and mad *Phanaticks*, let them wander and perish in their own wild imaginations, we will not leave one Ceremony, nor any one line of our Common Prayer Book to gain thousands of them. No, if you altar that, we will rather leave the Church and go to the *Papists* Mass. If these be not as simple Sectaries and mad *Phanaticks* as any whatsoever, let God and his holy Angels judge. But as for you my Reverend Fathers of the Church, I hope you will consult with Scripture in this weighty Affair, and Model all according to the rules of meekness, charity, and compassionate tenderness to weak ones, there set down: and endeavour with prudent admonitions to rectifie the errors of these too zealous Ceremonists, & with fatherly bowels of condescention to win the hearts of blind and wilful Separatists, Certainly the more understanding and powerful Leaders of them will not, cannot have the face to stand off after your charitable condescention, their populous pretences will be so confuted, their mouths so stopped, their faces so confounded, as for meer shame, if not for reason and religion, they must come into our Church: and their Pastors coming in, the Sheep will follow, though some stand a while and gaze: but at length having no men of ability to lead them on in their perverse wayes, the Shop-prating Weavers and Cobblers will soon be deserted, and made heartless, seeing their own naked folly. And then shall we all joyn and joyfully sing *Te Deum* in our Churches, and the holy Angels in the Heavens. And then I shall most gladly sing with good old *Simeon*, *Lord now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

Concerning

Concerning Preaching.

IT remains that I now handle this great buſineſs of Preaching, wherein I fear I ſhall diſpleaſe many, there being but a few who uſe it according to the Original Inſtitution; and yet I had rather they ſhould Preach as they do, then quite omit it; for certainly 'tis a neceſſary work for a Miniſter of the Goſpel to Preach the Goſpel. Saint *Paul* tells us, *That ſome Preach the Goſpel out of envy*; yet he was pleaſed that Chriſt ſhould be ſo preached rather then not Preached; and ſo I ſay of Preaching Chriſt out of vanity; as 'tis evident many do, preaching themſelves and their own abilities, at leaſt as they think abilities, though often great weakneſſes and conceited impertenances. I beſeech you tell me, did not Chriſt and the Apoſtles Preach the beſt way? and are not we to follow their Example? Who dare ſay otherwiſe? yet many do otherwiſe; they take here or there a ſentence of Scripture, the ſhorter and more abſtruſe the better, to ſhew their skill and invention, this they divided and ſubdivided into generals and particulars, the *Quid*, the *Quale*, the *Quantum*, and ſuch like quackſalving forms; then they ſtuddy how to hook in this or that quaint ſentence of Philoſopher or Father, this or that nice ſpeculation, endeavouring to couch all this in moſt elegant Language; in ſhort, their main end is to ſhew their Wit, their Reading, and whatever they think is excellent in them: No doubt rarely agreeing with that of St. *Paul, I determined not to know any thing among you ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified*; *and my ſpeech and my preaching was not with inticing words of man's wiſdome, but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power:* 1 *Cor.* 2. And I verily believe this is the reaſon why Preaching hath ſo little effect in theſe dayes, becauſe they labour to ſpeak the wiſdom of this world, which is fooliſhneſs with God, nor do they Preach in demonſtration of the Spirit, but in demonſtration of their Learning. I know full well this unapoſtolick way of Preaching was uſed by ſome of the Antient Fathers, eſpecially the *Greeks*, always fond of nicities and curioſities, and being now become Chriſtians (as I ſaid before) tranſplanted their beloved Rhetorical flowers of humane learning into Chriſtian Gardens, which proved rather Weeds to over-run the ſeed of ſound and plain Apoſtolick Doctrine, humane nature being a ſoyl apter to give nouriſhment and vigor to humane principles then divine. But when did ever any Learned, Witty Rhetorical harang, or cunning Syllogiſtical diſcourſe convert the tythe of St. *Peter*'s or St. *Paul*'s *fooliſh Preaching*, as he tearms it, *but the wiſdom of God to thoſe that are perfect* and ſound in the faith. Who is ignorant of that famous paſſage at the council of *Nice*? whither reſorted with divers others, one Eminent Heathen Philoſopher, offering

himself (as the manner of those vain-glorious Sophisters was, to dispute with the Christian Doctors; some Bishops of great Repute for Learning, undertook him, and as they thought, cleerly Confuted; but no way Converted him; at last rises up a grave antient Bishop of small Learning, but of great Faith and Piety, and (with great dissatisfaction of his brethren fearing some gross baffle should befal this good man) comes up to the Philosopher, and with great Magisterial Authority recites unto him the Apostolick Creed, *I believe in God the Father Almighty*------ and in the close calls to him, *O Philosopher believest thou this?* The Philosopher answered, *I believe*, not being able to resist the demonstration of Spirit and Power wherewith he uttered those Divine Mysteries, as he confess't before them all. You will say this was a Miracle of great rarity; I grant it, but many such Miracles should we see, had we the Faith and powerful Spirit of this Holy Bishop, and would indeavor to imitate Apostolical Preaching, not Philosophical Arguing, nor Rhetorical declaiming.

We see plainly the Apostolical Preaching was either Catechistical Instructions, or Pious Admonitions; not tying themselves to any form, but past from one matter to another as the Auditors condition required, not as the Preachers fancy and reading prompt; just as the *Roman* Emperour *Caligula*, who when Delinquents came before him to be judged, condemned or acquitted them as agreed best with the current of his Oration: So these men shape their discourse more to the applause then edification of the hearers. And so much time is spent in composing these Oratory Sermons, as the Minister hath not leisure to perform a quarter of his Parochial Duty, of visiting the Sick, of admonishing the scandalous, of reconciling the janglers, of private examining and instructing the poor ignorant souls, thousands in every Country as ignorant as Heathens, who understand no more of most Sermons then if in Greek; so that the Sermon is rather a Banquet for the Wantons that are full, then instruction to those who are even starved for want of spiritual food, the plain and saving Word of Christ, not the nice conceited word of Man, which may nourish Camelions, never make solid sound Christians. There are others of a different strain, who wanting both Wit and Learning also, think to supply all by strength of Lungs, by loud and long babling, riding hackney from one good Town to another, and with fervency of spirit like a boyling pot running over where ever they come. Were it a laughing matter, who could contain to hear some seeming Zealot Pastors talk so much of their obligation to Preach the Gospel, and must (forsooth) do it in the Pulpit twice a Sunday, counting those almost accursed that do not so, and yet have many poor Sheep in their flock as ignorant as any Sheep, whom they never regard, never instruct in the first Principles of the Gospel; as if Preaching were tyed to the Pulpit and the Sabboth day. Pardon me

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If I tell you a Story which now comes in my head: *I* chanced to be in a Lords House on a *Saturday*, when a zealous Minister came in; after some complements and ceremonious discourse, he told the Lord, That where ever he was he never failed to preach the Gospel on the Lord's day as his duty, and therefore entreated that the Pastor of the Parish might be desired to give place to him next morning. *I* suspecting both his zeal and design (which afterwards appeared) asked him if he had received any particular command from Christ to Preach at this place and that hour? The Minister startling at my Question, answered, No. *I* replyed, Sure then other Ministers had the same obligation to Preach the Gospel as he had, and moreover it was the Pastor's particular duty to Preach to his own Congregation on the Lord's day, how then could he in conscience desire the Pastor to omit his duty, and give place to a Stranger who had there no duty incumbent upon him? but the Lord pulled me by the elbow and took me off from farther pressing him, and told him, he would send to the Pastor to give him place. But to return to our business. Very few are to be found, here and there one of Piety and Discretion, that demeans himself prudently in his Office; and the reason is this. *It* is grown up into a general opinion, That none are fit to be admitted into Holy Orders but such as have studied in the University; and if he hath learnt a little to chop Logick, he is presently deemed fit to divide the Word of Truth, and is easily instituted into a Living, and if he can bring some nice Metaphysical speculations from *Aristotle*; or some Theological distinctions from *Aquinas*, then he is worthy of two or three Livings or Prebends: And thus University Youths, and even Boyes of no experience or discretion, are made Spiritual Pastors, the gravest and most weight Office in the World. *I* beseech you, what have these Sciences (falsly so called) to do with the Gospel, where we find not one tittle of them; but rather decryed as enemies to the Gospel, as tending to vain jangling, strife and contention, nothing of Edification. We had lately a brave story of the Jesuites in *China*, who finding the King and his Courtiers much delighted with the Mathematicks, but not very knowing in them, wrote to the General of their Order at *Rome* to send them some Priests, very skilful in that Science, to Preach the Gospel there. Why did they not send for some also well skilled in Puppit plays? ridiculous creatures shall *I* say, or rather impious, who think to support the dignity, the majesty, the divinity of the Gospel with such humane toyes? Just as if a King, having some potent Enemy invading his Countrey, should instead of leading on a stout and gallant Army against him, lead on a Morice-dance capering and frisking most featly, thinking thereby to appease and gain the heart of his Adversary. *Yea fools and blind; we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Ep. 6. 12. *And therefore the weapons of our warfare must not*

be carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, 2. Cor. 10.4. *We must then take the whole armor of God, the helmet of Salvation, the brest-plate of Righteousnes, the sheild of faith, the sword of the Spirit.* Read also St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, setting down the required qualifications of Bishops and Deacons, see if you can find any such Mathematick, Logick, Physick? No, but Gravity, Sobriety, Meekness, Diligence, and the like. Were such men taken into holy Orders and constituted Pastors, the Church of Christ had been far better edified, and the Pastors far more reverenced then now they are: though *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Euclid*, *Scotus*, *Aquinas*, were never known to them, so much as by name, yet they would want no pastoral knowledg which is compleatly contained in Scripture; as St. *Paul* told *Timothy*, *That it was sufficient to make him wise unto Salvation, profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction that the man of God might be throughly furnished*; mark, throughly furnished without Logick, Physick, Mathematick, Metaphysick, or School Divinity. Scripture Divinity throughly furnishes the man of God for all. I speak not this in disparagement of University learning, which I highly value, if rightly made use of, 'tis as useful as honorable to a Nation, but much of University Learning as useless to a Spiritual Pastor, as the Art of Navigation to a Physitian; the Pastors only requisite and compleatly qualifying Science, being according to St. *Paul to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, and to Preach Christ, not with inticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*; to Preach Christ as well out of Pulpit as in the Pulpit; in season and out of season; to the poor and to the rich; to the simple and ignorant far rather than to the knowing; to Rebuke, to Correct, to edifie both by word and deed.

Wherefore I most humbly beseech the Church Governors to remember the Original Institution of the Ministry, what kind of Men the Apostles chose into it, grave Elderly Men, therefore styled Elders, and known as well by that name as Bishops, who having by long conversation gotten experience and knowledg to govern themselves, were made Governors of others. I grant we have *Timothy* for an example of younger years, that is, young by way of comparison to the other Seniors; as a man of forty may be called young, compared to those of sixty; yet no youth simply, nor simple youth: and 'tis plain he was a person no way short of the Elders in gravity, though somewhat in years: St. *Paul's* general Rule was, not to admit of *Novices*; but all general Rules have some exceptions. *Timothy* was one and a rare one, we find not another. Next I pray consider what kind of Preaching they used, you may easily guess at their Sermons by their Epistles, full of short Catechistical Instructions, grave Exhortations, sober Reproofs, discreet Corrections, and then tell me whether a raw *Novice* from the University with all his Sciences and Languages be fit for this, or rather a grave sober person of age and experience, having a

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a good natural Capacity, illuminated by Scripture Instruction and Prayer, using also the help of grave and sound Interpreters. Really 'tis most evident that the Church is run into great contempt by the slightness and giddiness of many Ministers, who intend nothing but to make a handsom School-Boyes Exercise in the Pulpit on *Sunday*, but never attend the other Parochial duties, no nor their own advance in Spiritual knowledg, but give themselves wholly either to idle Studies, or idle Recreations, and are very children in Divine knowledg and behavior. I do affirm this in the presence of God as a truth, and I have known some pass for very good Preachers, that could not give a good account of the *Athanasian* Creed, nor scarce of the Childrens Catechism; Masters of Art, but School-Boys in true Divinity, and so their Parishoners continue very Babes all their life long.

It would make any true Christian's heart bleed to think, how many thousand poor souls there are in this Land, that have no more knowledg of God, then Heathens; thousands of the mendicant condition never come to Church, and are never lookt after by any; likewise thousands of mean husbandry Men that do come to Church, understand no more of the Sermon then Bruites: perchance in their infancy some of them learnt a little of their Catechism, that is, they could, like Parrots, say some broken pieces, but never understand the meaning of one line; (this is the common way of Catechising) but afterwards as they grow up to be Men, grow more babes in Religion, so ignorant as scarce to know their Heavenly Father, and are admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper before they are able to give account of the Sacrament of Baptism. This it is generally in the Country, and in the City as bad, partly for the reason before specified, and partly by reason the number in many Parishes is far greater then any one Pastor can have a due care of; he cannot know half the Names or Faces of them, much less their Faith and Behavior, which is requisite that he may both instruct and reprove where there is need. Wherefore I humbly conceive 'tis necessary to divide these numerous Parishes into several parts; but withal to provide means out of them for several Ministers, for there is no hope to gain it from their Charity or Piety, which is plain Hypocrisy, seeming so zealous to hear the Word, but to contribute nothing towards it; the Minister may Preach his heart out, and yet not get out of their purses any tolerable Maintenance; a poor Husbandman in the Country of twenty pound a year, that gets his bread by the sweat of his brows, pays more to his Minister than a Citizen that gets hundreds a year, sitting at great ease in his Shop, and spends more in Ribbonds, Laces and Perriwigs in one year, then he pays to his Minster in ten or twenty: I beseech them to consider what account they will give to their Lord and Master at that day.

But I return to the requisite qualities of a Minister, who according to

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St. *Paul* is to be a Governor as well as a Preacher; to admoniſh and rebuke as well as inſtruct, and therefore of two evils chooſe the leſſer, rather Men defective in parts to preach, which may be ſupplied by Homilies, then defective in Wiſdom and Diſcretion to govern, which can't be ſupplied by other means. But would Men be content with the true Goſpel and Apoſtolick preaching, doubtleſs there might perſons be found out fit for both, to Govern and to Preach; to preach one God the Creator of all, one Chriſt the Redeemer of all, one Holy Ghoſt the Sanctifier of all, to preach the Baptiſm of Repentance, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to preach Godlineſs, Juſtice, Mercy, Charity, Sobriety, Chaſtity &c. All which will be far better performed by a grave and godly conſcientious Man, well Catechized, though he never ſaw Univerſity, though he knew no other Language but his Mother Tongue, then by any *Ariſtoteliſt*, *Scotiſt*, *Aquinatiſt*, with all their knacks of quiddities and qualities, Syllogiſmes and Enthymems, diſtinctions and ſubſumptions &c. Not one *Greek*, or *Italian*, or *French* of a thouſand knew any Language but his Mother Tongue when the Goſpel firſt flouriſhed there; not one *Indian* of a hundred thouſand, where St. *Thomas* planted the Goſpel, ever heard of *Plato* or *Ariſtotle*; and ſo *I* may ſay of many other Nations where the Goſpel was planted and Prieſts ordained. When God inſtituted *Aaron* and that Prieſthood, when Chriſt inſtituted the Apoſtles and this Prieſthood, not a tittle mentioned of School Sciences or Forrein Languages. 'Tis true, the Apoſtles by the Holy Ghoſt received the gift of Tongues, becauſe they were to preach to all Nations, but we find not any infuſion of School-learning by the Holy Ghoſt, nor any more gift of Tongues after the Goſpel once ſpread over the world; God thought it then needleſs, I pray let's be no wiſer then God and his Chriſt, who converted the world by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching, but I never yet heard of any one Nation converted by the wiſdom of Philoſophical Rhetorical Preaching. Miſtake me not, I ſay that Sciences and Languages are no way neceſſary for common Parochial Preachers, yet I grant that Sciences, eſpecially Hiſtorical, and Languages eſpecially the Oriental, are very uſeful to the perfect underſtanding of Scripture, and very fit for ſome Miniſters to ſtudy, to whom God hath given parts and means to acquire them; who may be helpful to others; and the Univerſities are very good places to train up youths to this purpoſe; but ſtill theſe faculties are no way neceſſary to a parochial Cure, a ſmall proportion of Learning with a great deal of Piety and Diſcretion is much better. Beſides there is another thing much to be conſidered. Were there ſuch grave conſciencions perſons admitted into the Miniſtry as the *Apoſtles* ordained, ſuch Preaching ſet up as they practiſed, and all other decryed, ſuch double honor paid unto the Miniſtry as St. *Paul* commanded and primitively was rendred (ſuch grave perſons would ſcarce ever fail of it) then we might find thouſands in the Nation that having means of their own, would preach the Goſpel to the poor for conſcience

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sake. The maintenance for Minister in most parts is so wretchedly small (and so like to be, the Tythes being in the hand of Lay-men without hopes of recovery) that there is no convenient support for men of Worth and Gravity, and therefore Youths and Striplings as wretched are put in o them of meer necessity, that they lye not wholly void; whereas if Men that had some Estate to help to maintain themselves, being persons of conscience and convenient Knowledg, were put into the Ministery, and such preaching the Gospel accepted of, as the Apostles and Primitive Disciples used, the Cures would be served with far more edification of the People, and honor to the Church, then now they are.

I most humby beseech all in the spirit of meekness and humily to consider these things, laying aside the veil of pomp and vanity, which blinds their eyes, and hinders them from discovering the naked truth and simplicity of the Gospel, I call the Searcher of all hearts to witness, I wish unto all Clergy-men both double honor and double maintenance also, I can't think any thing too much for those who conscienciously labor in the Ministry. But seeing (as I said) there is no hopes of regaining the Church maintenance, we in prudence should seek out such helps as may be had. And truly I have great reason to hope, that were this rule observed of putting only grave discreet and conscientious persons into the Ministry (whether University men or not, it matters not, so as fully instructed in the Doctrine of the Gospel by sound Commentators) many persons of good rank and Estate would think it no dishonor but rather a higher honor to enter into it, as they did in the Primitive time; *Julian* neerly related to the *Roman* Emperour, and afterwards Emperor himself, thought it an honor to be admitted a Reader, one of the lowest Offices in the Church. And for the better advancing this business, and fitting all sorts of men with convenient Knowledg for the Ministry, I humbly conceive it very fit there should be one good and brief English Comment of Scripture selected and compiled out of those many voluminnous Authors, laying aside all impertinent criticisms, abstruse questions, nice speculations, and the like, setting down only the plain and most obvious sence in mattters of Faith and good life, necessary to salvation; such a book to be set forth by Authority, with a command that no man in Sermons, Exhortations or Catechisings teach any thing contrary to it, and whatever Learning beyond that is brought into the Pulpit, let it rather be exploded then applauded; for if any countenance be given to excursions, there will be no end, the itch men have to shew their Learning will soon bring us again into the vain unedifying practice we now are in. I humbly conceive it fit also that the book of Homilies be reviewed, not to correct any thing in them, for they are most excellent sound Exhortations, containing the true Primitive Spirit; but to add to them whatever is wanting to the necessary Doctrine of Faith and good manners, to teach every person how to behave himself in his several vocations, and these commanded to be read

once

once over every year; for I have observed several, even good and conscientious Preachers to take quite another method, and preach on this or that Chapter, and so in the whole year, yea perchance in two or three years, never preach on the duty between Man and Wife, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Magistrates and Subjects; or omit to treat of Pride, or Malice, or cheating, or the like, by reason of which omissions, several in the congregation are ignorant in necessary duties, though rightly instructed in things unnecessary.

I expect that many will cry out of this as a means to introduce laziness into the Ministry, and a hindrance from exercising those Talents God hath indowed them with. To this I answer, First, That I had rather the Ministers should be lazie, then the People ignorant in their duty. But secondly I answer, That besides Pulpit Preaching, the Minister may find enought to do to keep him from laziness, and exercise the best, that is, the most useful Talents of a Minister, to visit and comfort the Sick and Afflicted, to compose Differences and reconcile Janglers, to examine and instruct the meaner and duller part of his Flock, who are not capable of Pulpit preaching, to whom they must inculcate both Doctrines and Admonitions ten times over, and scarcely so, make them apprehend any Spiritual matters. Experience only can raise a belief how extreamly dull the common people are in the mysteries of Faith, and but little quicker in the principles of a good life: Christ dyed to save these poor vulgar Souls as well as those of the Gentry and more learn'd, yet the labor of most Ministers is to entertain those that know enough, and are very lazy in catechising those poor souls that know nothing; let these be fully instructed, and then for me, let them shew their Talents by preaching as often as they please to others: All that I labor for, is, that those may have it who most want it, either by injoyning such Homilies as mentioned to be yearly read, or such Sermons to be yearly preached: I am no enemy to true Apostolical preaching, God forbid I should; but to vain Scholastical useless preaching, to have the Pastor, who should daily watch over his Flock, sit in his Study all the Week long, picking from that or this Quaint Author a few beautiful Flowers, and then to come on *Sunday* with his Nosegay in his hand to entertain Ladies and Courtiers; for my part I count this far more sinful laziness, then to read a Pious Homily on *Sunday*, and all the Week after, go up and down from house to house takeing pains to instruct and exhort such as I mentioned: But these shall be called dumb Dogs, yet surely by none but barking curs, who are wholly ignorant in true Apostolick Preaching; Pardon me if I return them their due, who speak evil of that they understand not.

They will Object, The Apostles and Primitive Disciples did not read Homilies, but Preach'd themselves; Neither do I desire that any one Homily should ever be read, so as we had the true Apostolick preaching both on *Sundays* in publick, and Week-days also in private, where there is need:

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But I am ſure ſuch pious Homilies as I mentioned are no ways contrary to the Apoſtolical and primitive practice, and are far more uſeful then ſuch preaching as we have now adays. And I am alſo ſure, that in the pureſt and moſt primitive time, Homilies under another name were read in the Churches, that is, the Epiſtles of Apoſtolick godly Biſhops written to other Churches, were read in the Congregation with great Veneration; Shall the name of *Epiſtle* make the one applauded, the name of *Homily* make the other reproached, the contents and the intent being the ſame, to ſtirr up the people to godlineſs? If this will ſatisfy, let the *Homilies* be ſtyled *Epiſtles* to ſuch or ſuch a Church, and then I hope they will paſs for current. But you will ſay, The Compilers of our Homilies are not of equal authority to thoſe primitive Epiſtlers; Let that paſs, but I am ſure they are of far more authority, then moſt of our Preachers. I pray conſider, how many giddy Youths are of our Miniſtry, how many of greater age but of as little gravity or diſcretion; how many that vainly preach themſelves and their own abilities, not Chriſt and his Goſpel; how many that preach piouſly and yet not uſefully, but, as I ſaid before, many things unneceſſary, omitting many neceſſary: Summ up all theſe particulars, and you will find a ſmall remainder that preach piouſly and edifying alſo, very few to equal the Compilers of our Homilies; and then calmly conſider the great uſe, yea the great neceſſity of ſuch Homilies. But if you can furniſh all our Churches with pious diſcreet edifying preaching Paſtors, I am abundantly ſatisfied, and do you ſeal up the Book of Homilies till a new dearth of ſpiritual food, which God in his great mercy prevent. *Amen.*

Concerning Biſhops and Prieſts.

WHoever unbiaſs'd reads the Scripture, thence proceeds to the firſt Chriſtian Writers, and ſo goes on from Age to Age, can't doubt but that the Church was always governed by *Biſhops*, that is, by one *Elder*, or *Preſbyter*, or *Preſident*, or what elſe you pleaſe to call him, ſet over the reſt of the Clergy with authority to Ordain, to Exhort, to Rebuke, to Judg and Cenſure as he found cauſe: no other form of Government is mentioned by any Authority for Fifteen hundred years from the Apoſtles downwards. Now who can in reaſon and modeſty ſuſpect thoſe Primitive Biſhops who lived in the days of the Apoſtles, choſen by them into the Church, ſucceeded them in Church Government, yea and in Martyrdom alſo for the Faith, as *Clemens*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarpus* and others, who, *I* ſay, can ſuſpect them to be prevaricators in Church Diſcipline, and take upon them another form of

read next p. 34.

ſuperior to *Presbiter*, which I deny, the Apoſtles being peculiarly called *Presbyters*. Secondly, that one contains the other, I ſuppoſe is already confuted, and fully declar'd that it cannot be; And as I mentioned before, you do in effect confeſs it your ſelves by your practice; for if the Superiour Order ſo contains the inferiour as to enable a Man thereby to act all things belonging to the inferiour, it is a very impertinent thing to ordain a Man, as you do, firſt a *Deacon*, then a Prieſt, then a Biſhop, when you deſign to confer all upon him in the ſame day and hour.

And now I pray give me leave to examine a little *Petavius* his rare conceits, which he conceives will ſatisfy all former objections, and will meet with no news ones. He confeſſes the *Presbyters* of the Apoſtles times were all of one Order, *viz. Biſhops*, becauſe the Paſtors of each congregations might perform thoſe ſeveral acts he mentions, which a bare *Presbyter* is not capable of. And why not capable of them, how doth he prove this? he brings not one tittle of proof for this out of Scripture, where there are good proofs to the contrary. St. *Peter* and St. *John*, *Presbyters*, could do all theſe and more; *Ergo*, *Presbyters* are capable of all. But ſaith he, *The Apoſtles were Biſhops alſo*; *alſo* is impertinent, as ſignifying ſomewhat elſe; whereas I ſay and prove 'tis one and the ſame Order, only another name, it lyes upon him to prove this difference of Orders; and how doth he prove it, becauſe *Presbyters* can't do the acts of a *Biſhop*; why, this is the thing in queſtion; and thus he runs round to prove this by that, and that by this, and not one tittle out of Scripture for either. I know full well by ſeveral *Canons* of Councils made ſome at one time, ſome at another, the *Biſhops* reſerved many things to themſelves, whereof moſt of them had been practiſed formerly by *Presbyters*, and the Canons were made to prevent the like for the future; for had there not been ſuch a practice, there had been no need of ſuch Canons, whereby they reſerved theſe things unto themſelves, and for their own greatneſs would needs perſwade the World, that *Presbyters* were not capable of them. I grant, that for decency and order in that ſence, ſome things may be reſerved to ſome, other things to other to perform, but that the Order of *Prieſthood* was not capable, is even ridiculous that the *Prieſthood* being capable to do the greateſt things, ſhould not be capable to do the leaſt; he can conſecrate the Souls of Men by Baptiſm and the Lords Supper, yet (for ſooth) can't conſecrate their Oyl, and their Cups, and their Candleſtiks, which we never heard the Apoſtles did or dream'd of, but are the fond dreams of doting Men, juſt like the *Phariſees* waſhing cups and platters after the doctrines of Men. Really there needs no better confutation of their diſtinction and ſuperiority of Epiſcopal Order, then the mean ridiculous things which they aſcribe unto their Biſhops, and debar Presbyters of, which my thinks a Presbyter ſhould contemn were they offered him; and therefore ſuch Arguments as theſe are not worth the ſmall pains I have taken about them.

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I proceed to somewhat that seems a little better; *Petavius* tells us, That the number of Christians encreasing, and factions arising in the Church, the Apostles at length towards the end of their times, chose out of these *Presbyter-Bishops*, some chief Men and placed them as Governors over the rest, and reserved unto these principal Men the power of ordaining; thus far I freely consent, the Scripture declares it, and it seems most Rational. And I humbly conceive these Governors, and Ordainers were Men of great prudence and moderation, and probably had also that gift of the Holy Ghost, *The discerning of spirits*, and judging of Men (a gift mentioned in Scripture among others) that none might be admitted into the Priesthood but Men of meek and peaceable spirits. But now I would ask *Petavius* when these Governing Ordaining *Bishops* were set over the rest of the *Presbyter-Bishops*, when *Titus* was first settled with this Authority in *Creete*, and when *Timothy* was thus placed at *Ephesus*, where we find before were several *Presbyter-Bishops*, what became of them? were they un-Bishop'd and made simple *Presbyters*? they must no more ordain nor govern, but be subject to *Timothy* and *Titus*. I am sure it was thought no small punishment in future Ages, when *Bishops* were thus by decrees of Councel abased and cast down unto the *Presbyter* form, and it was for some notorious crimes. I pray what crime were all these *Presbyter-Bishops* guilty of, to be thus handled, and tumbled down into a lower form? Truly *Petavius* deals hardly with them, unless he can shew us their crime. Or will he instead of accusing them excuse himself, and say they were not un-Bishopt nor abased, but only restrained from exercising that power their order was capable of, had they been commissioned thereto. Truly I must commend *Petavius* if he will thus ingeniously confess the truth, for I shall by and by fully declare that 'tis the diversity of Commission; and not of Order, that enables Men to act diversly, and that a *Bishop* without commission can do no more than a *Presbyter* without commission; and therefore I farther begg of *Petavius*, that, till he can prove the contrary; he would confess them also to be all of one single Order, called only by divers names, *Priest*, or *Bishop*, and one chosen out of the number, not the rest abased, but he exalted with authority to Govern. This is the rational and common practice of all Societies, Corporations, Colledges, Monasteries, Conclave of Cardinals, what not; There is no new Order supposed in any of these, but only a new Election, and a new Authority given, according to the fundamental constitution of each Society. The Pope himself with his triple crown and triple dominion over all Patriarchs, Arch-Bishops, Bishops, pretends to have no new order of Popeship, but only the new Authority conferred by his Election: why then may not *Presbyters* chosen to prelide over the rest without any new Order, do the like. And for this very reason I conceive *Justin Martyr* uses the name of *President* always for *Bishop*; and St. *Cyprian* also, a Bishop himself, and most glorious Martyr, he calls himself

read next page 40.

doth not contain a real Horse in his belly, nor can a man beget Horses or men when he pleases. Nor can you truly say a man is a Horse; I believe my Schoolmen would take it in snuff should I affirm any of them to be Horses, &c. But they affirm that a *Bishop* doth not only virtually contain the Priesthood, but is really a Priest, and can make Priests or Bishops as he please, Whereby you may see this answer, That the Superiour Order virtually contains the inferiour, is a meer evasion; it sounds as if it were something, but really is nothing to our purpose at all; for we are not now upon Metaphysical abstractions, but real individual subsistencies, two actual distinct Orders, as they would have it, two distinct indelible characters imprinted on mens souls by Ordination, as *A.* and B. which can never be truly affirmed one of the other. *A.* is not B. and B. is not *A.* a man is not a horse, and a Horse is not a man; so a Bishop ordain'd only Bishop, is not a Priest, nor a Priest a Bishop, if they be distinct. Wherefore I must beleive them one and the same Order, especially seeing the Scripture applies the same name promiscuously to both; which is the second argument of their identity, to be one and the same.

Acts. 20. St. *Paul* sends to *Ephesus* to call the *Presbyters* of that Church unto him at *Miletum*, and speaking to them he calls them all Bishops (in our Translation 'tis *Overseers*) Verse 28. So in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, he directs to *all the Saints with the Bishops and Deacons*, both in the plural number so that by the word *Bishops*, we must needs understand *Presbyters*; for Bishops as we now take the word, were never many in one City. I pray observe also St. *Paul* Epis. to *Titus* 1. 5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete----- that thou shouldest ordain Elders in every City--- if any be blameless-- for a* Bishop *must be blameless*, Is it not here evident, that an Elder and a Bishop in St. *Paul's* Language is one and the same; otherwise there were no coherency at all in St. *Paul's* speech. If this be not convincing, beyond all possible evasion, I understand nothing of discourse. Other such places are obvious in Scripture to every one, I need mention no more; only I desire to inform the Reader of a passage to this purpose, in an Epistle of *Clemens* to the *Corinthians*, This *Clemens* is mentioned in Scripture, and is he whom St. *Peter* appointed his successor at *Rome*, and who was of so great Authority, that as St. *Hierome* tells us, this his Epistle was read in Churches: Now in this Epistle *Clemens* particularly sets forth the constitution of the Church by the Apostles, and what Ministers they ordained in the Church; to wit, *Bishops* and *Deacons*, he names no other, which seems to me as full an evidence as can be, that there were no other Orders in the Church in those daies but those two; And yet we are sure there was then *Presbiters* in the Church; for *Peter* and *John* call themselves *Presbyters*, and St. *Peter* calls them *Presbiters* to whom he wrote his Epistle; so that if there were but two Orders, to wit, *Bishops* and *Deacons*, *Presbyters* must be one and the same with *Bishops* or with *Deacons*; not with *Deacons* therefore one and the same with *Bishops*; One Order

called

called by two names promiscuously in Scripture, as hath been shewed before: And *I* desire you to observe that of those two names *Presbyter* and *Bishop*, if there be any dignity and eminency expreſt in one more then the other, sure it is in the name of *Presbiter*, not *Bishop*, because the Apostles themselves, and the chief of the Apostles (as some would have it who stand highest on their Pantables) are in Scripture styled *Presbyters* or *Elders*, as the word in our English Translation, but never *Bishops*, as *I* remember. And therefore *I* can't but wonder why that haughty head of the Papists should not assume to himself the title of his pretended predecessor St. *Peter*, *Presbyter* rather then *Bishop*, unless it be by God's providential disposure to shew his blindness in this as well as in other things, and make him confute himself by this name of Bishop, which was never given to St. *Peter*, no more then St. *Peter* gave unto him the Headship of the Church. As to the interpretations and answers given to these and such like Scripture expressions, sure *I* need not take any pains to confute them; for they are so weak as that *Petavius*, a late Writer, and great stickler for the superiority of *Episcopacy*, durst not trust to them, nor would venture his credit to make use of them, but found out a new and rare conceit, as he conceives, That these *Presters* mentioned in Scripture and called by both names, were all really *Bishops*, and that the Apostles Ordained them so, as most convenient for that time, for the Congregations of the Faithful being small, there needed no Priests under the Bishops to officiate, and yet there was need of a Bishop in those small Congregations, because there were several things to be done, which were not within the power and capacity of *Presbiters* to act, (as he supposes) *viz.* the laying on of hands, and confirming the Faithful after Baptisme, the veiling of devoted Women, the reconciling of penitents, the ordaining *Deacons* where there was need, and adds moreover several impertinences, as the making of Chrisme, consecrating Church-Vessels, &c. And *Petavius* mightily applauds himself in this conceit, as the only means to clear all difficulties: Our Doctor *Hammond* also finding the usual interpretations of those places of Scripture above mentioned too weak to sustain the arguments builded on them for the Unity of Order, goes along after *Petavius* a great way in the fore cited discourse (though not in the later impertinances), and affirms that the *Presbyters* then were all *Bishops*; And so far *I* go with them, that all were *Presbyters*, all *Bishops*, because all was one, and one was all, several names not several Orders, as they would have it, and this *I* humbly conceive firmly proved by my former Argument of one Ordination, wherein two distinct Orders could not be conferred, so that still *I* require them to shew me from Scripture where these *Presbyter-Bishops* were twice Ordained, else it cannot be truly affirmed they were really and actually Priests and Bishops. As for that answer, That though but one Order was conferred, *viz.* Episcopal, yet that being superior to the Priesthood contains this virtually in it; first you are to prove *Bishop* to be

superiour

read next p 38.

Episcopal Government contrary to Apostolican Institution. These great Masters of Self-denyal who gave their Lives for the Truth, would they transmit unto Posterity a Church Government contrary to the Truth; let who will believe it, I can neither believe it, nor suspect it: And there is yet another thing very observable, that all the Orthodox Church dispersed all the world over, some parts having no correspondence at all with the other by reason of distance, some by Warrs divided and made cruel Enemies, yet all agreed in this form of Government; and not only the Orthodox, but also the Schismaticks and Hereticks, who separated from, hated and persecuted the Orthodox Church, they likewise retained still this form of Government, as if all were of necessity compelled to acknowledg this, having never known, heard nor dream'd of other. And therefore nothing but necessity, if that, can excuse those who first set up another form of Government to their own Masters, let them stand or fall, I will not presume to censure them: I will only say, That from *the beginning it was not so*, and I thank God 'tis not so with us, but as it was in the beginning, so it is now with us, and ever shall be I trust in God. *Amen.*

But notwithstanding all this, yet 'tis very much to be doubted whether they were of any distinct superiour order from and above the Presbyters, or one of the same order set over the rest, with power to ordain Elders, to exhort, rebuke, chastise, as *Timothy* and *Titus* were constituted by St. *Paul*. For though they were of the same order with the other Elders and Pastors, yet there was great reason for some to be placed with greater Authority to rule over the rest. The Scripture tells us, That even in the days of the Apostles there were several seducing teachers, leading the people into errors and heresies, and more were to follow after the Apostles times, grievous wolves in sheeps clothing; and therefore it was very necessary to pick out some of eminent soundness in faith and godliness of life, and set them up on high with great Authority, as fixed Stars in the Heavens (so styled *Revel.* 1.) to whom all might have regard in dangerous times, as Marriners observe in their Sea-faring journies. But the Scripture no where expresses any distinction of order among the Elders, we find there but two orders mentioned, Bishops and Deacons. Of Deacons we shall treat afterwards. Let us now proceed to the Order of Bishops and Priests, which the Scripture distinguishes not, for there we find but one kind of Ordination, then certainly but one Order, for two distinct Orders can't be conferred in the same instant, by the same words, by the same actions. They who think Deaconship and Priesthood distinct, the one subservient to the other, though they intend in the same hour to consecrate the same Man Deacon and Priest, do they not first compleat him Deacon, then Priest? I pray let any Man shew me from Scripture (as I said) *Timothy* or *Titus* or any one ordained twice, made first Priest then Bishop,

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which is absolutely necessary if they be distinct characters, and 'tis generally affirmed, though I humbly conceive they scarce understand what they affirm, I mean they understand not what these characters are, whether *Greek*, *Hebrew*, or *Arabick*, or what else. But let that pass, I desire them only to shew me how a Man can make two characters with one stroke or motion, A. and B. at the same instant. If then neither *Timothy* nor *Titus*, nor any other were but once ordained, whence can we gather these two distinct characters, these two distinct Orders? We find the Apostles themselves but once ordained, those by the Apostles but once ordained, and so on. When St. *Paul* left *Titus* in *Creete* to ordain, he mentions only one ordination, that of Presbyters, (so the word in *Greek*) no other; ther's no commission given him to ordain Bishops and Presbyters. Who then was to ordain Bishops there? not *Titus*, he had no such command, we do not find that St. *Paul* himself did; And sure you will not grant that the Presbyters which *Titus* ordained, that they could ordain Bishops there, for you will not allow them to ordain so much as Presbyters? Yet Bishops you will needs have in every City, and in *Creete* were very many, who ordained Bishops for them all? Truly I can't find, nor you neither I believe. But you will say, The superior order contains in it virtually the inferior order, (let this pass at present) doth Presbyter then virtually contain Bishop? If so; then all Presbyters are Bishops. No say you, Bishop is the superior order, and that contains in it Presbyter. You say so, but by your leave you are to prove so, or give me leave to say otherwise, especially seeing I have Scripture for my saying, and you have none for yours. But should I grant Bishop the superior, what then? we find *Titus* ordained not any but Presbyters, as he was commanded by S. *Paul*; so we are still at a loss for our Bishops, we find not their Ordination. Or did St. *Paul* mistake in his expression, and meaning *Bishops in every City*, said *Presbyters in every City*, let this pass also, and I pray let us see what you mean by this, The superior order virtually contains the inferior. Do not you say they are two distinct Orders, two real distinct indelible characters imprinted in the Soul, as the School-men affirm (give me leave to talk their Language though I understand it not) If I take a fair paper and make an A. upon it for the character of Presbyter, and then make a B. upon it for the Character of a Bishop, the same paper contains both Characters, but sure one Character doth not contain the other, A. doth not contain B. nor doth B. contain A. So the same Soul may receive two Characters, two Orders, but if the two Orders be distinct, how can they contain each other, I understand no more then I do these Holy Characters. If they can paint them out unto me in their proper figures, perchance I may understand them better, but as yet I ingeniously confess my ignorance. I grant in a Metaphysical way of Abstraction, the superiour species contains the inferiour genus. A Man, a rational creature, contains the animality of a Horse, the inferiour creature, but

read next page 36

himself and other Bishops generally by the name of *Præpositus*, as if this were the main distinction betwixt himself and his Presbyters, that he was *Præpositus* only, one of them placed with authority over them: no more: Nor doth the name of Bishop in the original *Greek* signify any more then an Overseer of the rest. And as for the avoiding of Heresies and Factions, they thought it meet to settle some Bishop, of great soundness in faith, and godliness of life, with authority to restrain and chastise disorderly Pastors. Just so, when whole Nations were converted, and not only the Pastors but the Bishops also (who had oversight of the Pastors) encreased in number, then for the same reason it was thought fit there should be an Overseer of the Bishops, and be called an Arch-Bishop; when the Arch-Bishops were multiplied, then another set over them, and he called a Patriark; and at last one over the Patriarks, and he call'd *Papa* a Pope *Catexochen*, though *Papa* before was a name attributed to other Bishops. Now as *Pope Patriarck*, *Arch-Bishop*, *Bishop*, are all one and the same Order (Papists themselves grant this) so *Bishop*, *Elder*, *Presbyter*, *Priest*, all one and the same, only one of these set over the rest, and he now particularly call'd *Episcopus*, that is, Bishop *Catexochen*, because he oversees the Overseers: but this last constitution only is Apostolical, the other of Arch-Bishop, Patriark, Pope, are meer humane, not at all mentioned in Scripture.

But now another Objection arises, *Petavius* grants that all the Elders which the Apostles Ordained were Bishops, and towards the end of the Apostles days they set some eminent amongst them over the rest to govern and ordain Elders in every City, as *Timothy* and *Titus*, and these Elders in every City were Bishops, and thus the Apostles left the Church with Bishops only and Deacons. And this is evident by what I brought before out of *Clemens*, who lived after the Apostles days, and mentions only Bishops and Deacons left by the Apostles. This being so, *I* desire to know who after the Apostles days began this new kind of Ordination of *Presbyters* or *Elders* not *Bishops*, the Apostles Ordained none such; who then? and by what authority was this new Order set up? the Scripture mentions it not; when and by whom came it in? A very bold undertaking without Scripture or Apostolical practice.

I will not boast my conceit as *Petavius* doth his; only *I* wish the Reader to consider which is most practical, most rational, or rather most scriptural, thereon *I* frame this wole Fabrick as the Rock and only sure Foundation; humane Brain is too weak to erect and to support the Fabrick of the Church of God, which the *Romanists* have made a very *Babel* with their humane inventions and multiplied Characters and Orders; some of them would have nine several holy Orders in God's Church militant here on Earth, because there are nine several Orders of Cœlestial Spirits in the Church Triumphant in Heaven. This is a castle of their own building in the Air, a rare foundation for God's Church. Others will have seven several

veral Orders and Characters as seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Hath the Holy Ghost then but seven several Gifts to confer on Men? St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 12. counts unto us nine; not as if these were all, but only for example sake, to shew us that many and divers Gifts are conferred on us by one and the same Spirit; and in the conclusion of the same Chapter he mentions eight. These things were uttered accidentally according to the occasion, not as limiting the Gifts of the Holy Ghost to any set Number. But if you will farther look into their application of these Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and see to what kind of several Orders they appropriate them, it would make a Man amazed to see sober learned Men, even that great Wit and Scholar *Aquinas*, discourse in such wild manner; as did you but stand behind a Curtain to hear and not see them, you doubtless would conclude you heard some old Woman in the Nursery telling her Dreams to Children, rather than Divine Doctors in School. I'le name but one or two of their Orders. The Porter of the Church Door is one, and (he forsooth) hath a Sacred Character imprinted on his Soul, and his gift is *the discerning of Spirits*, that he may judg who are fit to enter into God's Church, who to be shut out. Another of their Orders is that of *Acolothi*, who are now (anciently they were quite another thing certain Boys carrying Torches, and attending on the Bishop saying Mass; these have their Character also, and their Gift of the Holy Ghost, is the *interpretation of Tongues*, signified (no doubt on't) by the Light in their Hands, but understand no more of Tongues than the Stick of their Torch. I will not weary you with more of their Absurdities.

Our Episcopal Divines rejecting these chymerical fancies of Orders and Characters, suppose it to be a certain Faculty and Power conferred by the laying on of Hands for the exercise of Ministerial Duties; and according to this purpose the Superior Order contains the Inferiour, as the greater Power contains in it the less: Thus *Episcopacy* being the superior Order, contains in it Priesthood and Deaconship, these three are their supposed distinct Orders. They may suppose this if they please, and I may suppose the contrary: But I would gladly know on what Scripture they ground this discourse, that's the thing I still require; and there we find no larger Faculty or Power given to *Bishops*, but rather to *Presbyters*, as I have shewed, the Apostles who had the greatest power being stiled *Presbyters*, not *Bishops*. And when our *Bishops* do Ordain *Presbyters*, do not they use the very same form of words which our Saviour used when he Ordained the Apostles? *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven*, &c. Do they not then by the same words confer the same power? (for I hope they use no Equivocation, nor mental Reservation) if the Power be the same, the Order is the same by their own Rule. Again, let us examine their own Practice; Do they not require a Man should be ordained first Deacon, before he be ordained Priest, and Priest before Bishop? what needs this, if

the ſuperiour contains the inferiour. But in Scripture we find it otherwiſe, *Timothy* who long officiated under St. *Paul* as a *Presbyter*, when he was left at *Epheſus*, and ſo when *Titus* was left at *Creet*, both to be Biſhops, we find no new ordination; were this requiſite, ſure the Scripture would have given us at leaſt ſome hint of it, but not one tittle there. But if the Scripture be defective in expreſſions, you will ſupply it by the expreſſions and practice of the Church in firſt ſucceeding Ages.

Before you go on and take much pains to ſhew me this, give me leave to tell you, that I ſhall not eaſily recede from Scripture in fundamentals, either of Faith or Church-diſcipline, in things indifferent of themſelves, or in more weighty matters very doubtfully expreſs't in Scripture, I ſhall always moſt readily ſubmit to the interpretation of the Primitive and Univerſal Church, I require both Primitive and Univerſal; for I ſhewed before, that in matters of Faith there were ſome errors very Primitive, yet not continued by the Univerſal Church, but rejected in ſucceeding Ages. And at the time of the Evangelical Reformation by *Luther*, *Melanction*, *Calvin*, &c. I can ſhew ſome errors generally received in moſt, if not in all the Churches of Chriſtendom, but neither approved nor known by the Primitive Church: wherefore I require what you produce, ſhould be both Primitive and Univerſal, and this to interpret ſome place of Scripture doubtful in it ſelf, not plain. Now as to the buſineſs in hand, I can't yield that the Scripture is very doubtful in it, or ſcarce doubtful at all; for though in Scripture 'tis not *in terminis* ſaid, *Presbytery* and *Epiſcopacy* are both one and the ſame Order, yet the circumſtantial expreſſions are (as I have ſhewed) ſo ſtrong and many, that they are equivalent to a clear expreſſion *in terminis*. Secondly, this not a matter of any indifferency, but of vaſt and dangerous conſequence, if miſtaken, That a Church without ſuch Biſhops as you require can't be truly call'd a Church, and ſo we ſhall exclude many Godly Reformed Churches: For if Biſhops be of ſuch a ſuperiour and diſtinct order as you pretend, if the power of Ordination be inherent in them only, Then where no Biſhop, no true Prieſts ordained, where no Prieſts no Sacraments, where no Sacraments no Church. Wherefore I humbly beſeech you be not too poſitive in this point, leſt thereby you do not only condemn all the Reformed Churches, but the Scripture and St. *Paul* alſo; who tells us, That the Scripture is ſufficient to make us wiſe unto Salvation, both in matters of faith and works alſo, to inſtruct and throughly furniſh us to every good work: and will any deny this of Ordination to be both a good and neceſſary work, ſeeing that the powerful preaching the Word and adminiſtration of the Sacraments depend upon it. Wherefore I dare not by any means ſuſpect the Scripture defective in this weighty affair. Yet to ſhew you our willingneſs to hear all things, let us hear what you can tell us from Antiquity.

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The first you bring is *Epiphanius*, three hundred years after the Apostles, from whom the main Objection is drawn against the Identity of Order, and shot as a Cannon Ball against us beyond all possible resistance, but you will find it to be a meer Tennis-Ball. *Epiphanius* making a Catalogue of Hereticks, puts in *Ærius* for one, who was an *Arrian*, and moreover held that *Bishops* and *Priests* were all of one Order, and of equal D gnity and Authority and that a *Presbyter* had power to Ordain, Confirm, and in short, to act any thing equal with a Bishop. That he was an Heretick is apparent, being an *Arrian*; nay, I shall not scruple to yield unto you that he was an Heretick in this his assertion concerning *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, (as we now understand them); I say, the Assertion contains Heresie in one part but not in every part, *viz.* That the Bishop and other Presbyters are of equal authority and power to act: this may, in some sense, be called Heresie, for it is against Apostolical Constitution declared in Scripture, therefore an Heresie; and if you can shew me from Scripture as much against Identity of Order, I shall brand him for an Heretick in that also; but being sure there is no such thing in Scripture, there can be no Heresie in affirming the Identity. I fully agree with *Tertullian*, we can make no judgment, *de rebus fidei, nisi ex literis fidei*, of matters of Faith, but from the writings of Faith, that is, the Scripture, and therefore I shall never be pulled from this Pillar of Truth. The Scripture is our compleat Rule of Faith, no Opinion is heretical and damnable which is not against that. Now, *Good Reader*, I pray take notice that *Epiphanius* was a very godly Bishop in the main, but yet a very cholerick Man, as appears in that his fierce contest with *John* Bishop of *Constantinople*, and his bitter expressions therein, which I do not mention in disparagement of this holy Man, but only to give the *Reader* a caution to remember, that passionate Men do sometimes censure more severely than there is cause: *Epiphanius* being a Bishop, and finding the authority and dignity of *Episcopacy* much disparaged by *Ærius* being an *Arrian* Heretick, falls upon him sharply for this his Opinion also, wherein he was in part much to be condemned, as I freely confest before, but not in the very Point now in question; nor doth *Epiphanius* himself condemn him in this particular as an Heretick, but only in the gross, to which I freely give my vote. But you will tell me, that a Man of a far milder temper, St. *Austin*, doth also enrol *Ærius* among Hereticks. I know it well, but I desire you to know that St. *Austin* doth not lay this to his charge as an Heresie, for he saith only thus; *Ærius also was an Heretick, for he fell into Arrian Heresie, and he added some Opinions of his own*; then St. *Austin* recounts several of his Opinions, whereof this was one, That he affirmed there was no difference between a *Bishop* and a *Presbyter*; where I pray you observe, St. *Austin* gives us the reason why he ranks him with Hereticks, (*viz.*) because he fell into the *Arrian* Heresie; then follows, And he added some Opinions of his own: St. *Austin* calls these Opinions not Heresies, for he doth not say he added

more Hereſies of his own. Secondly, I pray you obſerve, St. *Auſtin* makes no mention of his affirming the Identity of Order, but only this, That there was no difference at all between *Biſhop* and *Presbyter*, wherein I will condemn *Ærius* as well as you. But as for the Identity of Order, 'tis well known that St. *Auſtin* is noted by *Medina*, a Papiſt Writer, and others, to encline to this Opinion; but for my part, I think the words quoted from St. *Auſtin* do not expreſs any Opinion one way or other to this purpoſe, but are only a Complement to St. *Hierom*, who was but a Presbyter; yet in humility St. *Auſtin* being a Biſhop, acknowledges him to be his ſuperiour in many things. But I deſire you to take notice of another very remarkable and moſt worthy paſſage of St. *Auſtin*; who tells us plainly that we are not to read him, or any other Author, ever ſo holy, or ever ſo learned, with any obligation to ſubmit to his or their Opinions, unleſs they prove their Opinions by Scripture, or convincing Reaſons. So then, had *Ærius* been declared both by *Epiphanius* and St. *Auſtin* alſo, to have been a Heretick in this very particular of Identity of Order, yet they bringing neither Scripture nor any Reaſon at all, but meerly a bare narrative of *Ærius* and his Opinions, not ſo much as calling his Opinion in this particular Hereſie, much leſs offering proofs for it; by St. *Auſtin*'s rule we may, with great civility to them and great confidence in the truth, ſtill affirm the Identity of Order.

But how will I anſwer that Objection taken out of St. *Hierom*, who, ſay you, was as great a leveller of Biſhops with Prieſts as any (and therefore what ever comes from him, you may be ſure is extracted from him by the powerfulneſs of undeniable truth) yet he confeſſes that Biſhops have the authority of Ordination more than Presbyters. A Man may ſmile to ſee this uſed as an Argument for the preheminency of Biſhops, which is directly againſt it; For St. *Hierom* having diſcourſt of the quality and Identity of Presbyters and Biſhops, and having brought many Arguments from Scripture to prove that Biſhop and Presbyter was only two names for one and the ſame Office; for a further confirmation hereof asks this queſtion, I pray what doth a Biſhop do more than a Presbyter except Ordination? Plainly intimating thereby, that this could make no ſuch diſtinction of Eminency in them above Presbyters: I beſeech you conſider, Do not Presbyters perform Offices of a higher nature than Ordination? *Presbyters* are ordained Embaſſadors for *Chriſt*, to preach his Holy Goſpel for the ſalvation of Souls; they are under *Chriſt*, Mediators between God and the People to make interceſſion for them; they adminiſter the Sacrament of Baptiſm, wherein the Children of wrath are regenerated and made the Children of God, and Heirs of eternal Life; yea, they adminiſter the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper alſo, the moſt tranſcendent act of Religion and Chriſtian Dignity, whereby we are made partakers of the Body and Blood of Chriſt: And what doth a Biſhop more than theſe except Ordination? which being no Sacrament, ſure is inferiour in dignity to the other mentioned Acts, and therefore cannot

elevate

elevate them to a higher degree. Judg now, I beseech you, whether this question makes *pro* or *con*; Are not such questions always tending to disparagement? When any Man is boasting his Power and Authority, should I come and ask, What can you do more than others, unless it be in this or that poor business not worth speaking of? would he not take this as an affront? Wherefore it cannot enter into my head, that St. *Hierom* intended by this Question to express any superiour Order above the *Priesthood*, but plainly the contrary, *viz.* That Bishops having no other power distinct from Priests but Ordination, this could be no Argument for a distinct and superiour Order. And now I desire my *Reader*, if he understand Latin, to view the Epistle of St. *Hierom* to *Evagrius*, and doubtless he will wonder to see Men have the confidence to quote any thing out of it for the distinction between *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, for the whole Epistle is to shew the Identity of them. Before I chanced to read this Epistle, I was of the erroneous Opinion, that Bishops were a distinct Order, but so convinc'd by this Epistle, as I was forced to submit to a change: And I farther desire my *Reader* to observe the various fate of St. *Hierom* and *Ærius*: *Ærius* is reviled as an Heretick for affirming this Identity of Order; *Hierom* passes for a Saint, and a great Doctor of the Church, though he affirms the very same as fully as *Ærius*, or any Man can do; and therefore it may be my fate to be reviled as *Ærius* was; but our Saviour bids us rejoyce and be exceeding glad when we are reviled for his *Names sake*, (or for his Words sake, sure all is one) for great is our Reward; and so I proceed.

But there lies yet a great Objection made by our good Bishop *Hall*; he tells how that *Callathus* a *Presbyter* of *Alexandria*, took upon him to ordain others; and that afterwards, in a Council of a hundred Bishops in *Ægypt*, their Ordination was declared null, because ordained by a *Presbyter*: From this and some other such Instances, the Bishop would prove that the Order of *Presbyters* is not capable to ordain, therefore *Bishops* are a distinct Order. I am sorry so good a Man had no better a proof for his intended purpose. It seems he quite forgot how that the famous Council of *Nice*, consisting of above three hundred, made a Canon, wherein they declare, That if any Bishop should ordain any of the Clergy belonging to another Bishops Dioceſs, without consent and leave had of that Bishop to whose Dioceſs they did belong, their Ordination should be null. You see then the irregular Ordination of a *Bishop* is as null, as the irregular Ordination of a *Presbyter*; therefore the irregular *Bishop*, and the irregular *Presbyter* are of the same Order, of the same Authority, neither able to Ordain. Is it not most evident by this, that 'tis not their Order but Commission that makes them capable to Ordain; sure an irregular Bishop is of the same Order with the regular: Is the Line of his Dioceſs like a Con-

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jurers Circle, within it he is a Bishop, without it he is none. No, but within it he hath Commission given him to Ordain, without it no Commission, no nor to act in his own Dioceſs beyond his Commission, which is to ordain only the Clergy of his own Dioceſs, and within his own Dioceſs. Can any thing be plainer? *Celluthus* then being but a *Presbyter*, and under the juriſdiction of the Bishop of *Alexandria*; his taking upon him to ordain *Presbyters*, was highly irregular and inſolent, and therefore moſt juſtly declared null. I deſire the Papiſtical School-Divines, with their manifold indelible Characters to obſerve here, how eaſily the Councils daſht out the indelible Character of *Presbyter* imprinted on the Souls of theſe Men irregularly ordained, they made a clear raſure, not one tittle of it left. And could they ſo eaſily cancel the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt? I leave my Schoolmen to find out how this rare feat was done. And I proceed to add a Canon taken from a Council at *Antioch* concerning *Chorepiſcopi*, much to our purpoſe.

When the Apoſtles had ſettled Biſhops in every City, with authority of ordaining and governing the ſeveral Churches or Congregations within the Circuits of thoſe Cities; ſome were very large, and therefore in proceſs of Time, when more were converted to the Faith, and the Congregations encreaſed more in number, and at greater diſtance than the Biſhop himſelf could well have the overſight of; the Biſhop choſe ſome principal Men for his aſſiſtance; and dividing his great Circuit into ſeveral leſſer Circuits, placed theſe Men as Overſeers under him; and theſe were called *Chorepiſcopi*, that is, Country Biſhops, and were much after the manner of our Rural Deans. Thoſe *Chorepiſcopi*, Country Biſhops, being thus ſettled in authority to govern the Paſtoral Prieſts in their Circuits, took upon them to ordain more Prieſts when occaſion required, which the chief Biſhops took very ill at their hands, as a great leſſening to their Supream Authority. And to prevent it for the future, a Canon was made in the Council of *Antioch*, about the year 340. to forbid theſe Country *Biſhops* to ordain any *Prieſts*. Now I pray you obſerve, Theſe *Chorepiſcopi* were either really ordained in the Order of the *Chief Biſhop*, or not; if they were as full *Biſhops* as he, (as really they were) why might they not ordain *Prieſts* as well as he? The chief Biſhop anſwers, Becauſe he gave them no Commiſſion. Whereby you ſee that the power of ordaining Prieſts was annexed no more to Biſhops than to Prieſts, unleſs the Biſhops received a new Commiſſion to ordain, as well as a new Ordination. If it be anſwered, That theſe *Chorepiſcopi* were meer Prieſts ſent forth to have inſpection only over other Prieſts; Then I pray obſerve, that theſe *Chorepiſcopi* being meer Prieſts, took upon them to ordain other Prieſts; which certainly had been madneſs for them to do, had they then ſuch a Belief of Biſhops as is now required. They might as well have undertaken to create Stars in the Heavens: For if Biſhops only have received a Divine

vine power from Christ and his Apostles to ordain Priests, he that hath not this divine power of Ordination, can no more ordain a Priest, than a Man without the divine power of Creation can create a Star, both are impossible in nature: from whence it must follow, that these *Country Bishops* were directly mad in undertaking to ordain Priests, having received no such divine power from Christ, his Apostles, or their Successors: But if we take these *Country Bishops* for sober godly Persons in their right wits (as doubtless they were, being selected for that Office) they must needs believe that being Priests alone, they had power to ordain other Priests; and also believed, that the Bishops having made them Overseers and Governors in their little Circuits, they had also received thereby Commission to ordain as well as to govern, and were as little Bishops under an Arch-Bishop, for such really they were; so that I can't in charity censure them so much as of contumacy in taking upon them more then (they thought at least) they had Commission to act: I doubt not but the chief Bishop would be wary enough not to employ any contumacious persons. I conclude then, first, That it was only a meer mistake, an easie and pardonable mistake of their Commission. Secondly, That in those Times it was not thought an impossible thing for bare Priests, no Bishops, to ordain other Priests, for then certainly they would never have undertaken it. And I confess my self of their opinion; and can't but so continue till I see more reason to the contrary.

And I hope my *Reader* will see what weak proofs are brought for this distinction and superiority of Order, no Scripture, no Primitive General Council, no general Consent of Primitive Doctors and Fathers, no not one Primitive Father of Note speaking particularly and home to our purpose. Only a touch of *Epiphanius* and St. *Austin* upon *Ærius* the *Arrian* Heretick, but not declared, no not by them, an Heretick in this particular of *Episcopacy*; so that I my self declare more particularly against him then these Fathers do, accusing him of Heresie in part of his affirmation concerning *Bishops*, though not in every part.

I shall conclude this business by giving my poor Jndgment drawn from the preceeding Arguments. I find in Scripture that the *Priesthood* is a holy Order, into which no man is to thrust himself unless he be called; I do not find that *Deaconship* hath an inferiour part in it, or *Episcopacy* above it, but that it is compleat and entire in it self, and that it may involve many Administrations in one and the same Order, and sometimes many in one and the same person. St. *John* was an Apostle, an Evangelist, a Prophet, a Pastor, a Teacher, an Ordainer: (which we call Bishop) all these Gifts he had by one and the same Spirit, and in one and the same Priesthood. Christ himself was of this Order, *a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedek*, that is, both King and Priest, these were his Offices; he is called also the *Bishop of our Souls*: Was this in Christ a distinct and superiour Office or Order

der to his Prieſthood, who will preſume to affirm this? And Chriſt told his Apoſtles, *As my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you*; Chriſt therefore made them alſo *Kings and Prieſts*, as St. *John* tells us, *Rev.* 1. Our Saviour's Kingdom was not of this World, no more was that of the Apoſtles; Our Saviour's Office of *Prieſt* and *Biſhop* was one and the ſame, ſo was that of the Apoſtles; and they Ordained and ſent others, as Chriſt Ordained and ſent them; there was no diſtinction or diverſity of Order in Chriſt and his Apoſtles, no more was there in thoſe, who were Ordained and ſent by the Apoſtles, though there might be diverſity of Gifts or Adminiſtrations; all were not Evangeliſts nor Prophets, ſome had the gift of Tongues, ſome of Propheſie, ſome of Miracles, ſome of diſcerning Spirits; and ſome ſuch Gift I conceive they might have whom the Apoſtles conſtituted ſuperintendent Overſeers, Biſhops over the reſt, endued eſpecially with the Gift of Diſcerning and Judging of Men, and therefore fit to be entruſted with the Ordaining of others, for which there needed no new Order, but the enlargement only of their Commiſſion to Ordain, to overſee and govern thoſe that were Ordained. And theſe, as I ſaid before, being ſettled in this eminent manner over the reſt, were called by that name in *Greek* which ſignifies as much, and which we in Engliſh call Biſhop; and by degrees this name was wholly appropriate to them. In this order the Apoſtles left the Church at their Death, and in this order their Succeſſors continued it (as in duty ſure they ought) from time to time near one thouſand five hundred years, without any interruption. Wherefore for any to alter this way of Government, or to take upon them to Ordain, not being choſen this way to it, they would be guilty of great raſhneſs and high preſumption; and I thank God, I am as zealous for the preſerving this Primitive way, as any Man; Yet I cannot by any means conſent to them, who would have Epiſcopacy to be a diſtinct Order, for the Reaſons before given; nor can I think the Ordination of a Prieſt made by Prieſts invalid, for though it ought not be done, (but only of neceſſity) yet being done 'tis valid, and certainly may without any crime be done by any Prieſt, by ſhipwrack or any ſuch chance caſt into a Country where there were none Commiſſionated to Ordain; in ſuch a caſe he might and ought to Ordain other fit Perſons for the Service of God, and Preaching of the Goſpel. For who can doubt but that the Subſtance is to be preferred before Ceremony? And as St. *Paul* approved of the Preaching of Chriſt out of envy rather than no Preaching; ſo doubtleſs to Ordain out of order is better than no Ordination, and the Church of Chriſt be deprived of Preaching, Praying, and Adminiſtring the Sacraments, and all other Paſtoral Duties; ſo great neceſſity may well excuſe any irregularity: Yet where Order can poſſibly be obſerved, it ought to be, for God is *the God of Order*: Wherefore he that willfully tranſgreſſes againſt Order, tranſgreſſes againſt God, and ſhall *receive to himſelf damnation*: for if to reſiſt the Ordinance of Man only in humane

mane and temporal things be damnation, much more is it, to reſiſt an Apoſtolick Ordinance in things Spiritual and Divine.

Concerning Deacons.

HAving thus ſtated and united the two pretended diſtinct Orders of *Epiſcopacy* and *Presbytery*, I now proceed to the third pretended Spitual Order, that of *Deaconſhip*. Whether this of *Deaconſhip* be properly to be called an Order or an Office, I will not diſpute; but certainly no Spiriritual Order, for their Office was to ſerve Tables, as the Scripture phraſes it, which in plain Engliſh is nothing elſe but Overſeers of the Poor, to diſtribute juſtly and diſcreetly the Alms of the Faithful, which the Apoſtles would not trouble themſelves withal, leaſt it ſhould hinder them in the Miniſtration of the Word and Prayer. But as moſt matters of this World in proceſs of time deflect much from the original conſtitution, ſo it fell out in this buſineſs; for the Biſhops, who pretend to be ſucceſſors to the Apoſtles, by little and little took to themſelves the Diſpenſation of Alms, firſt by way of Inſpection over the Deacons, but at length the total Management, and the Deacons, who were meer Lay-Officers, by degrees crept into the Church-Miniſtration, and became a reputed Spiritual Order, and a neceſſary degree and ſtep to the Prieſthood, of which I can find nothing in Scripture and the Original Inſtitution, not a word relating to any thing but the ordering of Alms for the Poor. And the firſt I find of their officiating in Spiritual matters, is in *Juſtin Martyr*, who lived in the ſecond Century, he relates, that when the Biſhop had conſecrated the Bread and Wine for the Lords Supper, the Deacons took it from him, and delivered it to the Lay-Communicants there preſent, and carried it alſo to the Faithful that were abſent, hindered, I gueſs, from coming by ſickneſs, or ſome other good excuſing cauſe. In the beginning when the Congregations of the Faithful were ſmall, the Biſhop himſelf delivered the Communion to them, but at length encreaſing to great numbers, it would have taken too much of their time for the *Biſhop* to have delivered it to the whole Congregation; ſo the Deacons were made uſe of as fit Perſons for this matter; for in thoſe days there was always a Communion in the Aſſemblies on the Lords-Day, and the Laity that Day brought their Alms and Preſents with them, which were delivered unto the Deacons to diſpoſe of to the Poor by the *Biſhops* direction, and therefore the Deacons receiving from their hands their charitable Benevolence, were thought the fitteſt to return again to their hands the conſecrated Myſteries

being part of their offerings. But 'tis evident this was not yet come to be the genera lpractice of all Churches, but only in *Greece* where *Justin Martyr* lived; for *Tertullian* who lived in *Africk* some years after *Justin*, declares that the custome there was, to receive the blessed Sacrament from the hands of the *Bishop* only, whom he calls the President, that is, whosoever was chief in the Assembly whether *Bishop* or *Presbyter:* But yet I confess that this custom of the Deacons delivering the blessed Sacrament, or at least one part of it, *viz.* the Chalice, by degrees became the custome in most Churches in after Ages; and so passing from one thing to another in time they came to administer the Sacrament of Baptism, and at last to the ministration of the Word, the business which the Apostles peculiarly reserved to themselves; and which the *Bishops* also for a long time reserved so entirely to themselves, as it was thought a great insolency for any, even for the *Presbyters*, to take upon them to preach in presence of the *Bishop*. *Valerius* Bishop of *Hippo* (as *Possidius* relates) was sharply rebuked by his fellow *Bishops* for suffering St. *Austin*, then but a *Presbyter*, to preach before him. I know sometimes it was suffered also in other Churches, but very rarely, where the Bishop himself was of weak abilities for the work, and had some *Presbyters* under him very Eminent. And so it was with *Bishop Valerius* and St. *Austin*, a person of great note in those days. And thus you see in process of time how strangely things alter from their original institution, the *Bishops* omit preaching, and become servants of Tables, and the Deacons from serving of Tables step up into the Pulpit and became Preachers. But *Petavius* takes upon him to prove *Deaconship* a spiritual Order, and brings us a more early author for it than *Justin*, that noble *Martyr* mentioned before, *Ignatius*; who in his Epistle *ad Tralli*, calls Deacons (as *Petavius* conceives) Ministers of the Mysteries of Christ. Here I find that, which I often lament, learned men to go on in a track one after another, and some through inadvertency, some through partiality take many passages of ancient Authors quite different from their meaning, as here, all following the first erroneous Interpreter of *Ignatius*. Whoever first translated this Epistle of *Ignatius*, sure this fancy of Deacons ran much in his head, otherwise he could never have found them here, for 'tis evident the word *Diaconus* in this place relates to the *Presbytery* newly before mentioned, telling the people they ought to be obedient to the *Presbyters* as to the Apostles of Christ; (then follows) *You must therefore please them in all things, being Ministers of the Mysteries of Christ.* Mark I beseech you, *You must therefore*; is not *Therefore* a particle relating to what went before, *viz.* to the *Presbyters*, otherwise the speech is very absurd. Should I say, *Presbyters* are as the Apostles of *Christ*, therefore you must in all things please the Deacons, were it sence? no, but just, *Deus in cœlo, ergo, baculus in angulo*; but to say the *Presbyters* are as the Apostles, therefore you must please them in all things, being the Ministers of the Mysteries of *Christ*, as the Apostles were; this is very good coherent sence: and so run the words of *Ignatius*;

Ignatius; but the weak Interpreter mistaking the word *Diaconus*, ran into this error, and many Learned Men without any consideration have run after him. I grant the word *Diaconos* is often set for Deacons specifically distinguisht from Presbyters; but 'tis very often set for all Ministers in general, Apostles, Bishops, Presbyters, as you find frequently in Scripture. St. *Paul* in one Epistle, *viz.* the 2d. *Cor.* twice styles himself and other Apostles *Diaconous*. And I do the more wonder at the Interpreters mistake in this place, because by the following words *Ignatius* here excludes the specifical Deacons, saying, *Not the Ministers of meats and drinks*. Now we know the specifical Deacons were Ministers of meats and drinks to the Poor, it was their proper work, for this very end they were chosen, and for no other, as appears evidently in the *Acts*; and therefore *Ignatius* saying, *Not the Ministers of meats and drinks*, directly excludes such Deacons, and the word *Diaconous* must necessarily be taken in the larger sence, and relate to the Presbyters before mentioned, therefore please them in all things being the Ministers of the Mysteries of Christ, not of meats and drinks for the Poor. Whoever understands the *Greek* and will see, must needs see the truth of what I affirm. But *Petavius* intoxicated with this Spiritual Order of Deaconship, turns all this round quite another way, according to the working of his fancy. And so he doth some places of Scripture as little to his purpose as this. He tells us out of the *Acts*, that *Philip* and *Stephen*, both Deacons, were Preachers of the Word, that is a Spiritual Work, therefore belongs to a Spiritual Order. I would gladly know who informed *Petavius*, that *Philip* who Preacht to the Eunuch, and afterwards went about Preaching to others, was *Philip* the Deacon and not rather *Philip* the Apostle, as seems to me far more probable; for *Philip* the Deacon was by his Office to reside at *Jerusalem* and take care of the Poor; thither the Alms of the Faithful were sent, to relieve the Saints at *Jerusalem*. But you farther urge, Surely *Stephen* was a Deacon; and let *Philip* also if you please, it signifies little to the purpose. Sure, I can shew out of Scripture Preachers that were in no Spiritual Order, neither Presbyters, nor Deacons neither, as *Aquilla* and *Priscilla* his Wife too, and *Apollo* likewise, to whom they both Preached and instructed him more fully, sure they did not ordain *Apollo* a Deacon, nor can I believe any of the Apostles ordain'd him Deacon, and sent him forth to Preach before he was well Catechised in the Word, he was not so much as Baptized in Christ, but knew only the Baptism of *John*; if not Baptized, surely not ordained Deacon, yet he prevailed and mightily convinced the *Jews*. It is in reason strange, though in practice common, to see how Men wedded to an Opinion, think whatever they read speaks to that, so Fathers, Doctors, all clink as they think. In the Primitive time all both Men and Women did Preach the Gospel, taken in a large sence, as St. *Peter* calls *Noah a Preacher of Righteousness*, that is, they endeavoured to instruct

all they converſed with, in the Faith of Chriſt and Godlineſs, for which many both Men and Women ſuffered Martyrdom. Wherefore though *Philip* the Deacon and *Stephen* Preach the Goſpel, it ſignifies nothing to the Spirituality of the Deaconſhip, ſeeing that thouſands of Lay-men and Women alſo did the like. And ſo the Apoſtles laying their hands on thoſe choſen to be Deacons, ſignifies as little to this purpoſe. Do not we find that *Paul* laid his hands on the converted Diſciples at *Epheſus*, and they received the Holy Ghoſt, and Propheſied, yet none of them ordained either Presbyter or Deacon. And ſometimes the Apoſtles laid their hands on thoſe that were already ordained, both Presbyters and Apoſtles alſo, as on *Barnabas* and *Paul*, when they were ſent forth to Preach. This laying of hands was a Ceremony uſed on ſeveral occaſions, I need not mention more, they are obvious to any that read the Scripture. 'Tis evident then from Scripture, that the firſt inſtitution of Deacons was a meer Lay-Office, I will not ſay a prophane Office (as ſome too groſly and irreverently have termed it) but a pious and honourable Office in the Church of God, to ſerve Tables, to take care of God's Poor; but (as I have ſhewed) in proceſs of time it became quite another thing, and ſo different from the Original Inſtitution, as it made *Chryſoſtome*, and divers other great and good Men, doubt whether the Apoſtles did not conſtitute two ſorts of Deacons, ſome for this Lay-Office, ſome for Spiritual-Offices: Had *Chryſoſtome* conſulted only Scripture, he would never have doubted, nor dream't of two ſorts of Deacons, there being no mention at all but of one; but he ſeeing the practice of the Church (which he was unwilling to condemn) ſo different from that one Apoſtolical Inſtitution of Deacons; this ſo confounded the good Man that he knew not well what to make of it, and willing to piece Scripture and the preſent practice together, to put a new patch upon an old Garment, made the rent the wider, rending the Deaconſhip in two pieces, which of old was but one, only to ſerve Tables; which Office he that uſed well, purchaſed to himſelf a good degree, a good eſteem, and ſo it might be a recommendation to the degree of Prieſthood, though no neceſſary ſtep to it. And ſo we find that holy Deacon and moſt renowned Martyr St. *Lawrence*, was made a Prieſt, but continued afterwards in that ſame Office of Deacon unto Death, which he ſuffered in a moſt cruel manner, laid on a Grid-iron over Coals, rather than he would give up the Treaſury of the Church and Alms of the Poor, to the covetous cruel Tyrant. This holy Deacon *Petavius* brings to prove, that Deacons by virtue of that Order only, did miniſter in holy things, telling us, that St. *Ambroſe* mentions how he did diſtribute in the Lords Supper, the Blood of Chriſt to the Communicants under Biſhop *Xiſtus*. Whereas St. *Ambroſe* tells us how he Conſecrated the Blood of Chriſt, which plainly ſhews how untruly *Petavius* deals with us, and that St. *Laurence* was a Prieſt, not a bare Deacon, for neither *Petavius*, nor ever any allowed Deacons the Conſecration of theſe ſacred Myſteries.

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Wherefore seeing the Scripture allows Deacons, as Deacons, no more then serving of Tables for the Poor, whatever else Ministration is allowed them is by humane Authority, not Divine, and their Office or Order, which you please to call it, being about Temporal things must be Temporal, not Spiritual. And so I leave them to their proper Office of serving Tables, not finding in Scripture any thing more belonging to them.

Concerning Confirmation.

CONfirmation or some such thing is so necessary, that for want of due execution thereof, Persons extreamly unfit are admitted to the holy Table of the Lords Supper. I fear a quarter of the Communicants of this Nation do not sufficiently understand the true meaning of these holy Mysteries, the due preparation for them, the benefits, the damages, in worthily or unworthily receiving them: This I affirm upon experience, having, by way of discourse, questioned many both of low and high degree, where one would little expect such Ignorance. And by reason of this gross Ignorance in due preparing, and conscientious receiving this blessed Cordial and Medicine of the Soul (of power in it self to cure all our diseases if rightly applied) is turned into our destruction, and damnation of the Soul. For this holy Sacrament rightly apprehended, would strike a terror into the Soul and a dread of Sin, but Men receiving it without any regard into their sinful souls, the beams of Grace which this Sun of Righteousness brings with it, harden their dirty hearts, and make them afterwards unsensible of any horrid abomination whatsoever. And all this is occasioned by the want of some fit Person of authority, to examine youth of all degrees, ever so high or ever so low, before they are admitted to the Lords Table. For there being many poor ignorant Curates, many unconscientious careless Ministers, many over-awed by the superior quality of their Parishioners, some cannot, some will not, some dare not search into the requisite abilities of persons to be admitted. All which was prevented in the Primitive times of Christianity, when able and holy Bishops were elected, and therefore reverenced and obeyed in all Spiritual matters by the greatest as well as by the least. These diligently and publickly before the Congregation at set-times in the year, chiefly at *Easter*, examined all those who had been converted to the faith from infidelity that year, and all those, who baptized in the faith, desired admittance to the Lords Table; and upon approbation and confirmation of the Bishop, fit persons only were publickly Baptized by him, and at the Church door,

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assoon as Churches were built, where the Baptistery was placed, and then brought into the Church and admitted to the Lords Table: And no inferiour Minister did either Baptise, or administer the holy Communion, unless it were by the Bishops order on urgent occasions. These things are very well known to the Learned, who are conversant in *Ignatius* his Epistles, *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and other succeeding Writers. And in short, nothing was done of any moment, as is plain in *Ignatius*, but by the Bishops directions. But at length the number of Christians growing great, and multitudes of Children daily Born, and an Opinion growing up also, that it was absolutely necessary for the salvation of Children not only to be Baptized, but also to receive the holy Communion before death; it was impossible for the Bishop to be at hand to perform all, or to give particular order for all: Necessity forced every Priest in his Cure, to perform these Offices. Yet in process of Time, the Opinion of the necessity for Children to receive the holy Communion before death, declining, and few or none admitted till the age of discretion, and the necessity of Baptism for Children still continuing, the Bishops suffered still all Ministers to Baptise, but resumed to themselves again the power of Confirming and Licensing youth to the holy Communion. And Bishops only for a long time executing this Office, it grew by degrees into an Opinion, that Bishops only were capable to do it, and that Confirmation was a Sacrament, and such a Sacrament as inferiour Priests, supposed then also to be of an inferiour Order, were not to meddle with. What errors will Men, yea learned Men, carried along with a croud slide into, not willing to stand in opposition with a multitude, especially when countenanced by the Bishop their Superiour. And then succeeding learned Men having in their infancy sucked in the error, continue it in their riper Learned years, and endeavour to defend it as a certain truth; and at last it passeth for an Article of Faith, necessary to be believed. Thus have I laid out before you the true State and Progress of this business of Confirmation.

Now I pray consider first; Suppose Confirmation to be a Sacrament, and to be administred by the Bishop only, and none to be admitted to the Lords Table till Confirmed: How is it possible for a Bishop of so large a Diocess, as some of ours are (some extended three or fourscore miles, many forty or fifty) personally to Confirm half the Youth in a Diocess, if he duly examine each one, as is most fit and necessary. We see how this is performed in their Triennial Visitations; not a quarter of those, who are admitted, ever come to the Bishop, and yet the crowd is great: What is then done to those that come? They are asked by the Bishop, whether they believe, and will perform those things their God-fathers and God-mothers affirmed and promised for them at their Baptism; they answer, Yes, and so are confirmed: But what those things are, whether they understand and can give a good account of those things, not a word of this. Oh but the Curate,

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who presents those Children to the Bishop, assures him that they are fully instructed for it; this is the thing we complain of and desire to be redressed; that it may not be left to the discretion and care of every Curate, seeing what pittiful creatures are by them admitted. And do we not see sometimes (the Curate desiring to please the fond Mother) Children confirmed so young as cannot without a miracle be of a capacity to understand those divine Mysteries. Besides, it may often happen that a pious Child well fitted for the holy Sacrament, and perchance being weak, earnestly desires it before his death, yet must stay some years 'till next Visitation, or take a long Journey to the Bishop, for which he may want strength or means to support him. But in the Primitive times the Bishops Confirmed every year; their Dioceſs also was very narrow, so that access to him was quick and easie, and the work was as easie to the Bishop, yea and easie also to the inferiour Curate to instruct and prepare them; for Parents and Masters did then according to their bounden duty (the great neglect whereof in these daies will find sore punishment at the last day) made it their chief care to instruct their Servants and Children from their infancy in the Principles of Religion.

You see how impossible it is for a Bishop in a large Dioceſs and Triennial Visitation to perform this necessary work as it ought, and therefore in the second place consider, how necessary it is for the Bishop to appoint some discreet conſciencious Ministers (as our Dean Rurals should be) in several Circuits to examine and license to the Lords Table: For I pass it as granted that Confirmation is no Sacrament, and if it were, why may not Priests-not-Bishops perform it? certainly there is not one word in Scripture forbidding it, or any colourable pretence against it, nor can I discover the least ground of reason to forbid it; inferiour Ministers performing other offices superiour to it, and certainly equal to it, though it were a Sacrament, which our Church denies. There is nothing in the world can be pretended, but that in the beginning Bishops did only perform it. To this I answer, That from the very beginning there were no other Priests but Bishops, as I have shewed you, and then Bishops, did all other Ministerial Duties, Preach, Pray, Baptize, Catechise; and in succeeding Ages, when there were several inferiour Priests not Bishops, all but Confirming was ever transmitted to them; and to Deacons also Preaching, Praying and Baptizing, nay Baptizing tolerated in necessity to Midwives (I would glady see any such thing in Antiquity) and shall Confirming, the meanest of all these, be denyed Priests? You will tell me there have been decrees in some Councils to forbid it: And will you be bound up to all the decrees of Councils, without Scripture or any reason for them? If once we leave Scripture and hearken to the doctrines of men, ever so Holy, ever so Learned, ever so Primitive, we shall soon be wheedled into the Papists Religion, and many other Errors, which the Papists themselves now reject, as I have declared, at large before, and

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therefore I forbear, saying more now to this purpose; but proceed to a third Consideration, What will be the best means to prepare Youth for the receiving the holy Communion in every Cure, and then present them to such as are appointed to License them.

In the first place, I humbly conceive it will be necessary to add unto the Catechism, a short and plain Paraphrase upon every sentence in the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and Ten Commandments, and particularly to explain every unusual hard word therein. For those general Questions at the end of them do not so sufficiently open the understandings of the weaker or duller Youth, as that they know how to apply those generals to each particular sentence; but many Youths who can most readily say the Catechism to a little, yet understand many words no more than if they were *Greek*, and scarce are able to give you the meaning of any Sentence in their own words: And although they have all perfectly by heart, as we say; yet have very little in their heads and understandings; and so a Parrot may be well nigh as capable of the Lords Supper, as some of those.

In the next place I must tell you, That I fear as much Ministers of the best parts as those of the meanest for this necessary work of Catechizing, lest both have the same effect, though they act extreamly different, the one talking non-sence, the other above common sence, both of them confounding the brains of the poor Youths, who understand neither of them. I have heard some Learned Ministers call the Youth together, ask a few Catechism-questions, which the Boys answering readily are commended and dismissed: And then begins this learned Man a profound Lecture, shaped according to his own large dimensions, at which both Boys and Men also for the most part gaze, as at a prodigious Monster of Learning; and perchance some of them say to themselves the same, that *Festus* said to St. *Paul, The Man is besides himself, much Learning hath made him mad.* Sure he doth not know where he is, not in an University-Shool of Divinity; but in an Assembly of weak and silly Youth (who must *be fed with milk, and are not capable of strong meat*) where it were better for him with St. *Paul, to speak five words with his understanding, that by his voice he may teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue,* or in such *English* as they understand no more than an unknown tongue. I humbly beseech these Men to attend to the Form and Phrase of the Gospel, and mark what kind of matter and language the Divine Oracle used in Preaching it, even to the learned Scribes and Pharisees, and to learn of him who was *lowly in heart, and came not to seek his own glory, but the glory of Him that sent him.* I desire them also to read the latter end of the first Chapter of 1 *Cor.* and the beginning of the second, and learn from thence to speak the Wisdom of God in the weak and foolish way of Preaching, to instruct and gain the weak and foolish, yet wise unto God. Really no Man that hath not made

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some experience can believe, how strangely weak and dull thousands both of boyes and men also, are in apprehending spiritual matters: so that a man had need to study much, how to fit their weak heads with a sutable discourse, and hath as much need of great patience also to repeat every thing again and again, and even beat it into their heads. I have observed that *Plato*'s manner of many short and plain questions and answers to effect much; and likewise familiar similitudes from things within their own occupation and knowledge. And now to encourage them to this toilsome work, I beseech them to consider, that the Souls of these weak simple ones, cost our Saviour as dear, as those of the Philosophers, and therefore are as dear to him, yea it seems dearer, seeing St. *Paul* tells us in the place before cited, that he calls more of them to Salvation; and therefore they ought to be as dear to our Saviours Ministers, and to be chiefly called and sought by them; and then they shall be sure to have their reward from this our lowly Saviour.

In the last place, I conceive it necessary to consider, what course may be taken to bring all to Catechising: for I have heard some Pious Ministers much complain, that they have used their utmost endeavours, yet cannot effect it: and it can never be expected, that many of the Youth will come, unless compelled by Parents and Masters; of whom many are so careless, many so covetous, as they think every hour lost, which is not spent on their worldly affairs: so that the Parents and Masters need compulsion as well as their Children and Servants. And considering how this necessary work of Catechising hath been neglected for many years past, it is much to be feared that the aged need it as much as the youth. But would Parents and Masters well consider the great advantages that would accrue to them, even in their worldly concerns, they would be very zealous to come themselves, and both see and hear their youth Catechized, and bred up in Piety and Godliness: the want whereof hath bred that great undutifulness in children, that sloth and falseness of servants, which we sadly behold in this degenerated age, And let me mention once again the strict account Parents and Masters must give to God for so great neglect to those committed to their charge, Wherefore unless some fitter expedient can be found, I humbly conceive it would have some effect, if such careless Parents and Masters were not admitted themselves to the Holy Communion, who were faulty in this kind: for though many of them are not very zealous of the Holy Communion, and could easily pass it by, yet for reputation sake they would not easily incur the being rejected; and doubtless many of them would be moved thereby, and the example of some would be followed by others, and so by degrees the number would encrease; and when Catechizing by this means begins to grow in fashion, it would quickly be taken up by all. God be merciful to us, that Religion in many is chiefly for fashion sake! yet I hope by Gods assisting grace, Religion begining,

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though but in fashion, would end at last in true Devotion, at least in many, if not in all. However it is good that God should publickly be glorified, the publick would speed the better for it, though the private hypocrites suffer punishment in the end. God in his mercy turn their hearts that they may escape.

Of Church Government.

MY last particular which remains yet to be handled, is that of the Authority of Bishops to govern as well as to ordain. And in the first place, who can but wonder to see men so zealous in assuming to themselves the sole power of Ordination, so much neglect, and even wholly abandon the power of the Keys, that of Excommunication, so high and so dreadful; which, though by great abuse in latter times is made very contemptible, yet in the original institution and Primitive practice was very terrible: A power to deliver men over unto Satan, that Prince of darkness, to take full possession of their Souls, and sometimes of their Bodies also, both being sentenced thereby to the everlasting flames of Hell; and likewise a power to release penitent souls from the chains of darkness, and slavery of the Devil, and restore them to the glorious liberty of the Sons of God; whereby they are made Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. If there be any thing under Heaven fit to stir up the Ambition of mortal men, yea an ambition in Angels themselves, sure this is it. Who can forgive sins but God alone? said the *Jews* to our Saviour Christ swelling with indignation against him for this, though they had seen many divine Miracles wrought by him, yet this is so peculiar, so transcendent a divine act, as not to be offered at by any but the great God *Jehovah* himself. But blessed for ever be this great and gracious God, who by his eternal Son Christ Jesus hath given this power unto men. As his heavenly Father sent him with this power, so sent he his Apostles with this power, saying unto them, *Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained*: Wherefore if there be any thing in the Office of a Bishop to be stood upon and challenged peculiar to themselves, certainly it should be this; yet this is in a manner quite relinquished unto their Chancellors, Lay-men, who have no more capacity to sentence or absolve a sinner, then to dissolve the heavens and earth, and make a new heaven and a new earth, and this pretended power of Chancellors is sometimes purchased with a sum of Money, their Money perish with them. Good God! what a hor-

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rid abuſe is this of the Divine Authority. But this notorious tranſgreſſion is excuſed, as they think, by this, that a Miniſter called the Biſhops ſurrogat, but is indeed the Chancellors ſervant, choſen, call'd, and placed there by him, to be his Cryer in the Court, no better, that when he hath examined, heard and ſentenced the Cauſe, then the Miniſter (forſooth) pronounces the ſentence. Juſt as a Rector of a Pariſh Church ſhould exclude any of his Congregation and lock him out of the Church, then comes the Clerk ſhews and gingles the Keys, that all may take notice that he is excluded. And by this his authority the Chancellor takes upon him to ſentence not only Laymen, but Clergy-men alſo brought into his Court for any delinquency, and in the Court of the Arches there they ſentence even Biſhops themſelves. This is a common practiſe in later ages, but in St. *Ambroſe* his time ſo great a wonder, as with amazement cryeth out againſt the Emperour *Valentinian*, when he took upon him to judge in ſuch caſes, ſaying, *When was it ever heard of ſince the beginning of the World, that Lay-men ſhould judge of ſpirituals*, (he means in ſpiritual things, not in temporal things, which by the laws of God and man belongs to the Lay-Magiſtrate) This was that *Ambroſe* of whom the other great Emperour, as Good as Great *Theodoſius*; Father to this *Valentinian* affirmed, *Ambroſe* onely knew how to act the Biſhop, and with all Chriſtian humility this great Emperour ſubmitted to the ſentence of this godly Biſhop denying him entrance into the Church for the cruelty acted by his Souldiers at *Theſſilonica* by his command; and upon his great repentance and pennance performed ſix months together, aud after pnblique confeſſion in the Church, was again abſolved and joyfully received into the Church. Oh my Great and Reverend Fathers of the Church the Biſhops, whom Chriſt hath cleaved to his high dignity, whom he hath made Kings and Princes, whom he hath called to ſit with him on his Throne, there to give ſentence of eternal life or eternal death, can you ſo tamely part with this prime flower of your Crown, yea the very Apex of it, and ſuffer the Lay-members of the Church to uſurp this divine authority? Or how can you anſwer it to the chief Biſhop of our Souls, if any one Soul by the ill management of the Chancellors ſhould certainly periſh? ſhall not his blood be required at your hands? But perchance ſome of you will anſwer, 'Tis no fault of yours, but of your predeceſſors, who gave ſuch Patents unto them, as by vertue thereof they exerciſe this power, will ye nill ye. 'Tis too true, and I remember when the Biſhop of *Wells*, hearing of a cauſe corruptly mannaged, and coming into the Court to rectifie it, the Chancellor Dr. *Duke* fair and mannerly bad him be gon, for he had no power there to act any thing, and there with all pulls out his Patent ſealed by the Biſhops Predeceſſor, which like *Perſeus* ſhield with the *Gorgons* head frighted the poor Biſhop out of the Court. Where are you Parliament men you great Sons of the Church ſo zealous for Epiſcopal Government, yet ſuffer this principal part of it to be thus alienated and uſurped by Lay-men?

If an unordained person take upon him to pray or preach, with what outcries and severe Laws, and with great reason also, you fall upon him; but if an unordained person take upon him to judge, sentence, and excommunicate Bishops themselves, you calmly pass it over, take no notice of it. You will answer me, The Bishops themselves pass it over, yea and pass it away from themselves and their successors for to gratifie their kinsmen, or their friends; or perchance for worse, why then should you stir in it. Truly in this you have reason, and the balme most wholly light on them, who do not use all possible endeavour and implore your assistance also to rectifie this great abuse, which subverts the main Pillar of the Church Government, this is no Ceremonial matter, but the very substance of it, they strain at Gnats and swallow Camels. For Chancellors to intermeddle in Probats of Wills, payment of Tythes, or any other temporal matters, there is no scripture nor reason to condemn, but rather to condemn, Bishops, should they interpose in such matters for which they have no commission from Scripture, but rather a prohibition from that saying of our Svaiovr, *Man who made me a judge or a divider over you?* but then it will be necessary, that Chancellors have also power of Temporal punishments, and not prophane that high and holy power in sordid earthly things; certainly a greater prophanation than to convert a Church into a Chandlers Shop; the Church is a bulk of earthly materials and holy only by dedication; the power of its Keys is in its own nature and original constitution spiritual and divine: If *Uzza* being no *Levite* suffered death for laying hold on the Sacred Ark of God to support and hold it up, what shall he suffer who being no consecrated person layes hold on the sacred authority of God to pull it down from heaven to earth? Let them consider.

But let not the Civilians for this account me an Enemy to their Profession, which no man honours more, and I heartily wish much more of our Civil matters were commited to their management and judicature. The Civil Law is that whereby most of the civilized World is govern'd, and if we will have commerce with them, 'tis fit we should have able Civilians to deal with them, which will never be unless they have profitable and honourabl places to encourage them for it; all that I beg of them is, that they would contain themselves within their own Sphear of activity, and not intrude into spiritual and sacred matters committed by Christ and his Apostles to the Priesthood. And so I beg of Priests, that they would not intermeddle in Lay and Temporol officer. In the time of Popery when Spiritual and Temporal affairs were all intermingled and horribly confounded, as the Pope took upon him Secular and Imperial authority, directly contrary to the Word and Constitutions of Christ, so the Bishops and Priests under him intermeddled in all Secular Affairs and offices, and in this Nation Bishops were frequently Lord Keepers, Treasurers, Chief Justices,

Vice-Royes, what not? which is ſtrangely un-Apoſtolical and unlawful, their vocation being wholly Spiritual, as Men choſen out of the World, ſhould have no more to-do with it, than of meer neceſſity for food and rayment. Wherefore to take upon them any Lay-Office, which muſt needs take them off much from the Miniſtry of the Word and Prayer, is doubtleſs very ſinful: For *Acts* 6. we find the Apoſtles gave themſelves continually to theſe, and would not endure to have theſe interrupted by that charitable Office of taking care for the Poor; certainly then they would have much leſs endured; yea, abominated to be taken off by temporal and worldly Offices. And on this occaſion, let me ſpeak a word to thoſe of the inferiour Clergy, who take upon them to ſtudy and practice Phyſick for hire, this muſt needs be likewiſe ſinful, as taking them off from their ſpiritual employment; had they ſtudied Phyſick before they entered Holy Orders, and would after make uſe of their skill among their poor Neighbours out of charity; this were commendable, but being entered on a ſpiritual and paſtoral Charge, which requires the whole man, and more to ſpend their time in this, or any other ſtudy not ſpiritual, is contrary to their vocation, and conſequently ſinful; and to do it for gain is ſordid, and unworthy their high and holy Calling. But *Neceſſitas cogit ad turpia*, the maintenance of many Miniſters is ſo ſmall, as it forces them even for food and rayment to ſeek it by other Employment, which may in ſome meaſure excuſe them, but mightily condemn thoſe who ſhould provide better for them: Whether this belongs not to King and Parliament, I muſt humbly beſeech them in Chriſts name ſeriouſly to conſider: I crave pardon for this (I hope uſeful) Digreſſion, and return to the Buſineſs of Excommunication.

This Sacred Authority of Excommunication being committed by Chriſt to the Apoſtles by them to their Succeſſors, was uſed in weighty and very ſcandalous matters, very few examples of it in Scripture: The inceſtuous *Corinthian Hymenus* and *Alexander*, ſcarce another clearly expreſt. The Apoſtles being fully guided by the Holy Ghoſt in all things, did exerciſe this power ſingly themſelves; but the ſucceeding Biſhops, having not the Spirit of that full meaſure, uſed the aſſiſtance of the principal Clergy in their Dioceſs, that the act might be more ſolemn and authentick; the perſon excommunicated, if he conceived the act injurious, appealed to one or more neighbouring Biſhops, who aſſembled together, and diſcuſſing the matter, either confirmed or reverſed the Act, as they found cauſe: And ſometimes the matter proceeded ſo far as to cauſe an Aſſembly of the whole Province. But each Biſhop, or *Præpoſitus* (as St. *Cyprian* calls him, and declares, that he) was abſolute in his own Dioceſs to exerciſe his power, and none condemned for uſing it, but only for abuſing it contrary to reaſon and conſcience; there were the only rules they proceeded by at firſt. Afterwards when Biſhops on this or other occaſions met in Aſſemblies Pro-

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vincial or General, they made it divers Canons, which passed for Rules and Laws to govern the Church by, which doubtless are very good helps to bridle the extravagant passions of particular Men, very apt in this corrupt age to prevaricate; yet I cannot conceive them so far oblidging but new emergent circumstances may justly cause new and different Decrees; yet so, as every particular Bishop is oblidged for peace sake to submit to, or at least to acquiesce in the General Decree of that Nation where he lives. I said, They are not bound entirely to submit to the Decrees of former Councils, either Provincial or General; because, as I have shewed before, all their Decrees are humane, not Divine; and all humane Ecclesiastical Laws are alterable, according to the time and occasions by other General Councils.

As to the bounds of each Bishops Dioceſs, they were occasioned several wayes: The Apostles for the better spreading of the Gospel, Preach't it first in the principal Cities, which generally had great influence upon the adjacent parts, by reason that the occasions of most call them thither; and in these Cities they settled the chief Pastors of the Church, with power to ordain Presbyters and Pastors in other lesser Cities and Towns round about, as the Congregations of the Faithful encreased; and all those Churches that were erected, and Pastors establish't in them by these Apostolick Men in the chief Cities (I humbly conceive in reverence of their worth and Apostolick authority) were freely observant and subject to them, which afterwards out of custom, grew into a kind of right challenged by their successors. Sometimes the authority of the Pastor or Bishop of a City was enlarged according to the temporal authority of the same, it being the Metropolitan of this or that Countrey; for so we find in the Council of *Nice*, and other Councils, the chiefest and largest authority given to the Bishop of old *Rome*, because it was the first Imperial City, to *Constantinople* as the second Imperial City, to *Alexandria* as the chief City of that part of *Africa*, to *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, *Ephesus*, *Corinth*, *Phillipi*, &c. where you see that though *Jerusalem* were the first City from whence the Gospel issued forth, *Antioch* the second City where the Gospel was planted, and where the Faithful were first called Christians; yet *Rome*, *Constantinople* and *Alexandria* were preferred before them, and had far larger Jurisdiction; so that it is a meer humane temporal matter, and Men have no farther obligation to it in conscience, than for Peace sake and Order, which in like manner obliges every Man to be subject to all Magistrates within their respective Jurisdictions.

There are yet two things more to be considered in this business. First, Where the Apostles first planted the Gospel in Cities with authority over the adjacent part, it was in rich populous Countries, where Cities were much nearer together than in these *Northen* parts, and the circuit of each City was much less in compass, so that the Bishop might well have the inspection

pe ction into all, and underſtand the behaviour of each Paſtor under him, to admoniſh and chaſtiſe when there was cauſe. Whereas with us partly by great diſtance of Cities, partly by the favour of former Princes, ſeveral Towns being caſt into one Dioceſs, they became ſo large, as 'tis impoſſible any one Biſhop ſhould have a ſufficient inſpection into them. As I ſaid before of great Pariſhes ſo here of Dioceſſes, the Biſhop knows not the names nor faces of half, or a quarter of them, much leſs their behaviour, he may have as well a part of *France* in his Dioceſs to govern. And as for their Triennial and Circuity Viſitations, they ſignifie juſt nothing as to this, 'tis a meer money buſineſs to pay procurations to the Biſhop, fees to Chancellors, Regiſters, &c. the Biſhop indeed uſually makes a Speech unto them, and a Sermon is preach't by ſome one of them, wherein perchance good Admonitions are given; but what knowledge can the Biſhop by this have of their lives, or doctrine, or diligence? If he continue long there he may learn a few more names or faces, ſcarce any thing more. I humbly conceive this ought to be redreſſed, and the Dioceſs bronght into that compaſs, that each Biſhop may be a Biſhop in Government, as well as in Title and Authority over them. But if the Dioceſſes be divided leſs, and Biſhops more encreaſed, where ſhall we have maintenance for ſo many Biſhops, ſome having too little already? When ever I ſhall ſee the Clergy of this Nation Congregated by his Majeſties Authority, reſolved in good earneſt to reform and eſtabliſh all according to the holy Conſtitutions of the Primitive Times, and come to this laſt mentioned, contracting the bonds, and in number encreaſing the Dioceſſes, and Biſhops for them, I'le undertake to propoſe wayes both rational and conſcientious of providing convenient maintenance for all; but I deſire to be excuſed at preſent, leaſt greedy Harpies make ill uſe of my zealous intentions.

And ſo I proceed to conſider a ſecond abuſe in Church Government, which is, Exempt Juriſdictions, a thing altogether unknown to Antiquity and brought in by Papal Tyranny. The Popes at the height of their uſurped dominion, taking upon themſelves to be head of the Chriſtian Churches, to be the Univerſal Biſhop thereof, and all other to be but their Curates, took then upon them alſo, among other matters, to exempt from the power of any their under Biſhops whomſoever they Pleaſed. And out of policy to have the more Creatures and Vaſſals immediately depending on them in every Kingdom and Nation, to ſtickle for them with Kings and Princes on all occaſions, did for the moſt part exempt all Monaſteries (who with their near Relations and Tenants made a great part of the Kingdom) from the Juriſdiction of the Biſhop; they exempted alſo ſeveral Deans and Chapterss, ſeveral peculiar Chappels, ſeveral Arch-Deaconries, and other, and ſome of theſe were endowed with Archiepiſcopal Juriſdiction in their Precincts, wherein they acted whatever they pleaſed, without controul of any but their Popeſhips: All which would have appeared a confuſed madneſs in

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Primitive times, when for any person to have been out of the Jurisdiction of all Bishops, was to have been quite out of the Church, and would have been lookt upon as a Heathen and Infidel, according to the Primitive practice in all Ages, till Papal usurpation. And therefore all these Exempt Jurisdictions are meer Papal, and if duely examined, will be found opposite to the established Laws of this Kingdom since the reformation from Popery, as they are directly opposite to the Primitive Canons of the Church before Popery was known or heard of. And by reason of these Exempt Jurisdictions great disputes and great frauds arise between the Bishop and them, and the poor Clergy are so pild and pold by them both, that they are forc't to go in threadbare Coats, whilst the several Officers of both grow fat and fair by fees extracted from them. Wherefore I humbly conceive the Bishops, with the rest of the Clergy are bound in conscience to implore the Assistance of both Houses of Parliament to Petition His Majesty for the redress of these abuses by Pious Laws, Setling the Church Government in the Primitive purity and authority, which most evidently was very great, and as greatly reverenced, Bishops being the persons to whom Christ and his Apostles committed the Souls of Men, bought with the precious blood of Christ, to whom be glory, and to his holy Spouse the Church, be all Sacred Authority for ever. *Amen.*

A Charitable Admonition to all Non-Conformists.

MY beloved in Christ, you see how earnestly I have pleaded for you to the Fathers and Governors of our Church, that they would graciously condescend to abolish some Ceremonies in the Church, that they may receive you into it; but yet I have no great hopes that they will hearken to me, you your selves for whom I plead, destroy my hope; for they presently dash me in the teeth saying, go rather and perswade the Sons in duty to submit to their Fathers, then Fathers to yield to Sons; and can you deny but of the two you are rather to submit? You think to excuse this by saying, Were it not against your Conscience you would submit, but you dare not for fear of displeasing God, his holy Word forbids you; I beseech you shew me in his holy Word any one clear sentence, against any one Ceremony commanded in our Church; you see plainly I am not biast to any one Ceremony,

remony, and I am ſure I have read the Scripture all over ſeveral times, and I humbly conceive 'tis no pride of heart, if I think I underſtand Scripture as well as you; and for my part I cannot find any one condemning Sentence in Scripture. But you have the Spirit of God enlightening you, which I want; by this rule you may affirm any thing out of Scripture, and I ſhould be as mad in diſputing againſt you, as you in affirming it; 'tis madneſs for a blind man (as you conceive me to be) to diſpute of colours; therefore if you are ſo void of all reaſon, as to expect your bare affirmation, you that you have light, ought to convince all gain-ſayers, I ſhall not trouble my ſelf or you, to gainſay you farther, but addreſs my ſelf to others, who ſoberly undertake to ſhew me ſuch Texts, as an unbiaſt Chriſtian willing and deſirous to ſubmit to all Scripture Truths (as I am ſure I am) may diſcover the truth of them; and I deſire thoſe ſober undertakers to ſhew me, any one ſuch clear Text to excuſe their non-conforming, as I ſhew them for their conforming: *Submit your ſelves to every ordinance of man &c.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. and, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit, Heb.* 13. 17. Theſe are as clear as the Sun, that you ought to obey: Now if the Text you bring be not ſo clear but doubtful, I beſeech you is your conſcience ſo bold againſt a clear Text, and ſo timerous at a doubtful Text, is this religion or reaſon? is it not apparently wilfulneſs and faction? I beſeech you my Brethren, take heed of thus diſſembling with God and the world, or take heed of giving your ſelves up to theſe deluſions of a miſtaken ſpirit. Humility and Obedience are evident marks of the Spirit; *Learn of me*, ſaith Chriſt, *Math.* 11. 29. *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*: *God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* Wherefore I beſeech you, firſt, put on the Lord Jeſus with all humility, that he may give you the grace of his holy Spirit, to diſcern clear Truths, from conceited fancical errors. Secondly, I beſeech you conſider, whether of the two it be not ſafer to erre in the way of Humility, then to erre in the way of Pride, which makes it doubly damnable, void of all excuſe (I ſay this becauſe you think or pretend to think our way erronious, not that I have any ſuch thought or doubt) whereas the Humble Soul hath great excuſe to plead; and if Charity cover a multitude of Sins, ſure Humility will cover ſome; a Soul clothed with Humility can't eaſily be diſpleaſing to our humble Saviour; but clothed with pride, can ſcarce be acceptable, but rather hateful, like the proud Phariſee, with all his enumerated Virtues; and my Brethren, 'tis moſt evident your ſpirit ſavours ſomewhat of the Phariſee, magnifying your own holineſs, and deſpiſing all others as Publicans and Sinners, and refuſing all communion with them; whereas the Holy of Holies, our Lord Jeſus, choſe chiefly to converſe with ſuch; really I can't but think your caſe very dangerous on this account only, were there no more to accuſe you of. Thirdly, I beſeech you to conſider the great miſchief you bring upon this Church and Nation by your ſeparation from the Church; You pretend to be the great

Zelots against Popery, and yet give me leave to say, Your indiscreet disobedient Zeal mainly brings it in; your separation, and many following divisions, have caused many to abhor our Church, and turn to Popery, and doubtless you are to give an account to God for the ruine of those Souls; for I can never yield that you have any reasonable and true conscientious cause of separation, but meerly mistaken-reason and conscience, which I much pity, but no way approve; and therefore I must lay the advance of Popery to your charge, to your separation, for I am sure 'tis the main snare wherewith they catch unstable Souls, perswading them our Church is not guided by the Spirit of Truth, seeing it is confounded by the spirit of division, it cannot be of God who is both Verity and Unity. Now though it be well known to the Learned, that their Church hath neither Verity nor Unity, yet this is not discernable to weak Souls, especially here in this Country, where their Church is under a cloud; and therefore their foul spots nothing so visible as abroad, where it walks barefaced, but are here by their Priests either with great confidence deny'd, or with great cunning disguised. Wherefore again I most earnestly and most humbly beseech you for Jesus sake, put on our Lord Jesus in all humility and obedience, submitting your selves to the Ordinances of those Superiours and Powers which God hath set over you; and if out of meer humility and obedience you conform, though you were guilty of some error therein (I am confident there is none, yet were it so) my Soul for yours, that guilt shall never be laid to your charge by our most gracious Saviour, and most merciful Judge Christ Jesus our Lord: to whom be all honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

MARVELL. Andrew